

Linguistic Analysis of Humor in Jordanian Arabic among Young Jordanians Facebookers

Ala'Eddin Abdullah Ahmed Banikalef

School of Linguistics and Language Studies (SOLLS)
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Marlyna Maros

School of Linguistics and Language Studies (SOLLS)
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Ashinida Aladdin

School of Linguistics and Language Studies (SOLLS)
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Abstract

This study presents preliminary analysis from a sociopragmatic perspective of the speech act of humor in Jordanian Arabic as used by Jordanian Facebookers. The data of the current study was collected from Facebook status updates. A total of 1535 status updates were collated and classified according to their communicative functions. Of this number, 210 humorous messages matched Nastri et al.'s (2006) description of humor and were analyzed to determine the pragmatic functions utilized in writing a humorous status update on Facebook in Arabic. The findings indicate that generally the Jordanians tend to be more serious and less humorous. In terms of gender differences, the findings reveal that female participants were less humorous than their male counterparts. These findings suggest that certain aspects of humor are more culture-bound, as in masculine societies such as Jordan, women are perceived to be subordinate to men. Within these societies, men are supposed to be talkers, whereas women are expected to be listeners. The findings also highlight that the function of humor is governed by three pragmatic functions, namely, love, life and work. It was also found that female participants were more interested in posting hilarious romantic anecdotes, whereas male users were more concerned with discussing humorous daily life activities.

Keywords: Arabs, Facebook status updates, Jordanians are very serious, online humor, online speech acts,

Introduction

There has been a proliferation of language and gender studies in the last few decades (Newman et al. 2008). Linguists have explored the relationship between the usage of language and gender differences by employing various methodologies and a wide range of variables. Research on humor has also seen rapid acceleration among researchers. The field now has journals devoted exclusively to the study on humor. Examples of such journals include: *The European Journal of Humor Research*, *International Journal of Humor Research*, *International Society for Humor Studies*, as well as other periodicals on language usage such as *Journal of Communications*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communications* and *Journal of Personality and Individual Differences*. There are many hypotheses and stereotypes postulating gender differences in the use and appreciation of humor, but there is an obvious lack of studies exploring how Jordanians use humor in social networking sites (SNSs), especially in Facebook. This paper is an attempt towards bridging this gap.

In the virtual community, SNSs may perpetuate a mirage of a real life community and provide a platform for the real life discourses (McNeill, 2008). An essential part of interactions among people in a community entails the use of humor in daily conversations that could range from teasing, banter to self-mockery (Norrick and Chiaro, 2009). Sociolinguistic studies (e.g., Carr et al., 2012; Dimicco and Millen, 2007; Kloučková, 2010; Mcneill, 2008) have contended that humor serves an essential social function in SNSs. In this respect, the researchers concentrate on online humor as a key example of everyday life among its users. It is well-documented that humor in all its complexity is a major element of human culture that merits researchers' close attention. The everyday online social interactions could provide deeper insights and reveal the thought process that could assist in understanding the particular online speech community.

SNSs play a major role in the Jordanian society, especially among the young generation. Among the many SNSs that are available, Facebook seems to be one of the most popular SNSs, and Jordanians are particularly attracted to it. According to CheckFacebook.com, the number of Facebookers in Jordan was over two million in 2012, which accounts for half of internet users in Jordan. Jordanian users between the ages of 18 and 24 years comprise 44% of the total Facebookers (Ghazal, 2012). Mcneill (2008) and Björnsson (2011) contend that Facebook is growing in popularity among young people who are of or approaching university age. The sample in the current study is taken from Jordanian undergraduate Facebookers aged between 18 to 24 years.

In addition to features such as 'profiles', 'friends', 'comments', and 'private messaging', Facebook is flexible because it allows its users to update their status messages anytime. The status messages reflect users' comments, views and feelings and allow them to share the updates of their activities with each other at any time (Das & Sahoo, 2011; Ellison and Boyd, 2007). Wilson et al. (2012) also assert that Facebook offers a unique opportunity for researchers to examine a wide variety of social phenomena in a realistic setting. Based on this claim, the current study chooses Facebook status messages as an analytic tool to investigate naturally occurring humor acts in the Jordanian context.

It is widely assumed that Jordanians are less humorous compared to other nationalities as reflected in some newspaper articles, cartoons, Facebook groups or pages and academic writing. This is probably due to the fact that Jordanians frown a lot, even in the public places (Freij, 2012). In an effort to substantiate empirically whether Jordanians are less or more humorous than

others, it would be appropriate and relevant to examine Nastri et al.'s (2006) findings with regards to the Jordanian context. In their study, Nastri and his colleagues investigate how participants use language to construct their instant messages. They found that almost one-fifth of the data included some attempts to evoke laughter.

In the present study, the researchers extend Nastri et al.'s work by providing an empirical analysis of the frequency of humor production in Facebook status updates. This extension has two objectives: first, to find out the frequency and manifestations of humor in Facebook status messages among young Jordanian Facebookers, so as to compare between the frequency of humor of this study and those found in Nastri et al. (2006); and second, to understand the pragmatic function of humor in Facebook status updates because the analysis of how people present themselves through humor may give a deeper understanding into the value system of the Jordanian young community as reflected in their speech. These objectives are guided by the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. What is the frequency of humor produced in the Facebook status updates messages (FUSM) among male and female Jordanian Facebookers?
2. What function does humor play in the FUSM among male and female Jordanian Facebookers?

Literature Review

There is an ample amount of literature on humor, documenting and revealing how it is performed by speakers with various features in different social contexts (Lynch, 2002). Social scientists from different disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, and gender studies have explored the features of humor and joking (Shifman & Lemish, 2010). Linguists have studied and approached humor from different angles, including sense of humor (Martin & Sullivan, 2013), humor appreciation (Carretero-Dios & Ruch, 2010), and humor as a coping strategy (Samson & Gross, 2012). This literature review represents an assessment from the body of studies available. It reviews the features of humor which provide relevant background information to the current paper.

Despite the great number of studies exploring humor, no satisfactory definition has yet been reached (Samson et al., 2013). Researchers define humor in different ways. Berger (1976), for example, defines humor on the basis of the audience's interpretation as a "specific type of communication that establishes an incongruent relationship or meaning and is presented in a way that causes laughter" (Berger, 1976 cited in Duncan, 1982, p.136). In his definition, Berger highlights laughter as a main thrust of his definition. Winick (1976), on the other hand, concentrates on the speaker's intention and defines humor as "any type of communication that has a witty or funny intent that is known in advance by the teller" (p.125).

Based on the given definitions of humor, it can be seen that although the definition of humor is possible, its application to the selection of instances from real life data is difficult to determine. There is unavoidably some subjectivity involved, and the researchers may use some sort of their understanding to the data. Researchers may put the emphasis on a particular aspect based on what they are interested in. Hence, the essential dilemma is to make obvious which criteria are being applied, so that the reader may understand what is meant when the word "humor" is used in any study.

One of the most well-known definitions of humor is the one propounded by (Lynch, 2002). According to him, humor is an “intended or unintended message interpreted as funny” (Lynch, 2002: 423). This definition is adopted in the current study because it is more comprehensive than the others, and it has a high frequency of use in online humor research studies (e.g., Carr et al., 2012; Nastri et al., 2006). Lynch, in his definition, takes into his consideration the fact that humor is a matter of subjectivity. Although different people are able to appreciate the humor in the same joke, there would also be those who would not find it funny. In other words, while unsuccessful humor fails to make a listener laugh, it is still an attempt to evoke hilarious responses.

Different theories have started to look at the functions that humor plays in a particular context (Tracy et al., 2006). They have explored the psychological motivations of humor, theorizing that individuals may find certain messages to be funny due to superiority, relief, or incongruity (Lynch, 2002). First, the superiority theory suggests that people are motivated to use humor as they can feel superior over others or even over one’s own previous situation. Superiority humor is usually found either in the form of laughing at others’ inadequacies, or self-derision (Cooper, 2008; Gruner, 1978). However, the superiority theory is too limited because not all funny situations make individuals feel superior.

A second psychological theory considers humor as a tool for relief from physical and emotional problems (Lynch, 2002). This means that a joke or laughter is used to reduce tension or boredom. According to this theory, humor can be an appropriate means for breaking the ice among individuals. It increases trust among parties and helps individuals to save face in their interactions. The third theory is incongruity theory. According to Cooper (2008), this theory focuses on the object that is the source of the humor (joke, cartoon, etc.). More specifically, incongruity theory proposes that humor is based on intellectual activities rather than a drive to be superior or to reduce tension (Lynch, 2002).

These three main theories- superiority, relief, and incongruity- continue to dominate theoretical understandings of humor motivations and origins. However, regardless of motivation or origin, humor has been unilaterally perceived as an essential activity in everyday interactions (Carr et al., 2009; Lynch, 2002). Drawing on status messages posted by Facebook users, Carr (2012) found that online humor is used as a means of engaging in interpersonal communication with others, and it functions as a mechanism for identity creation.

In his study, (Lynch, 2002) tried to explain how a communication approach can be used as a medium between the psychological and sociological studies of humor. He proposed that there are general functions which humor serves in a society such as identification, differentiation and resistance. He claimed that in contrast to psychological or sociological research that gives more attention to what humor does for the individual or for a society, sociolinguistic researchers should give more attention to explore how humor serves as a social function among individuals or among the particular speech community.

Huang and Kuo (2011) found in their study that humor could be a source of power and influence, enabling organizations to foster unique dynamic environments, perhaps improving the competitive advantage of the organizations. They concluded that humor plays a significant role in promoting team spirit and forging cohesive units in organizations that unanimously are concerned with their own survival and profitability levels. Their findings are supported by other

studies which concluded that humor is a useful tool to facilitate communication; build relationships; mitigate tensions; create open atmosphere that improves listening, understanding and acceptance of messages; enhance romantic relationships; influence perspective; deflate self-importance or undue emphasis on a particular project or policy and encourage concentration and motivation (Cahill & Elke, 2008; Gardner et al., 2005; Locke, 2011).

In order to explore how participants use language to construct their away messages, Nastri et al. (2006) investigated the social applications of instant messaging (IM). More specifically, they examined what specific types of speech acts were used by participants to create their away messages. Data was analyzed based on Searle's (1969) speech act taxonomy. Away messages were first coded into descriptive categories such as assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative. Then, they were analyzed for humor and were marked as either containing humor or not comprising any humor. The findings indicated that the messages were constructed mostly with assertives, followed by expressives and commissives, but rarely with directives. It became evident that humor was frequently detected in away messages. Almost one-fifth of the data included some attempts to evoke laughter and amusements (humor). The researchers concluded that away messages were constructed with two communicative goals in mind: to entertain and to inform. These findings are upheld by other researchers who asserted that away messages away messages often express both informational and entertainment meanings (Baron 2004; Carr et al. 2009).

In the Jordanian context, literature on humor is very scarce. One of the recent studies by Alzoubi (2012), examined the different types of humorous animated cartoon texts on political, economic and social topics. She hypothesized that each culture has its own unique way of expressing humor which may not easily be understood or comprehended by people from different cultures. In order to test her hypothesis, she collected data from different Jordanian websites such as www.sawaleif.com, www.mahjoob.com, and toons.kharabeesh.com. The animated cartoons were transliterated and translated into English. Then, analysis was executed based on three sources of humor, namely, linguistics, context and character. The findings revealed that humorous texts primarily serve three functions. The first function deals with social issues related to the Jordanian culture. It was observed that humor was used to criticize, disapprove, and complain about inappropriate behaviors in the society. The second function is related to economic issues. The humorous texts in this context were used to raise people's awareness and attention to economic issues that surround them which affect their lives. The majority of these texts revolved around the role of corruption as one of the main problems of Jordan's economy. The third function deals with political issues. The political humorous texts were regarded as effective tools to criticize political corruption, government, politicians, bias, inequality and society. The researcher concluded that humorous texts that contain pragmatic ambiguity are easier to understand than those that contain linguistic ambiguity or culture-specific meanings.

The studies reviewed above examined the speech acts of humor through different data collections methods such as the Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT), animated cartoons and IM. It should be noted that there are other studies on online humor which were conducted in English speaking countries (e.g., Carr et al., 2009; Lynch, 2002). However, studies on online humor based on non-western languages are very scarce. To the researchers' best knowledge, there has been no serious attempt to study the act of online humor in the Arabic culture in general and particularly, in the Jordanian speech community. This venture into exploring speech acts through

a new and widespread social medium has set the purpose of the study, that is, to examine humorous status updates posted by Jordanians on Facebook.

As such, the current study has significant potential value for four reasons. First, it would extend the pragmatic analyses of humor by examining a large body of real-life data. Secondly, it will deal with a group of participants who (from a linguistic perspective) are relatively under-studied, and whose communications are formed by the online media affordances of a relatively novel communicative context. Thirdly, it would familiarize Arab EFL learners with the way native Jordanian Arabic speakers use humor in Facebook status updates, since what is considered funny and hilarious in one culture may seem inappropriate or even serious in another. Finally, the studies reviewed above used conventional instruments to collect data which include DCT, animated cartoons and IM. However, with regards to humorous Arabic texts posted in Facebook status updates, a method of investigation has yet to be determined for the speech act of humor. Therefore, this study attempts to expand previous research of speech act of humor and online messaging by examining how individuals use the Facebook status updates to communicate humorously. More specifically, it is an attempt to understand the role of humor in Facebook status updates through examining the frequency of humor as appearing in speech acts.

Methodology

Social scientists have distinguished between two different approaches the Internet can be used in research. These are named as 'Web as corpus' and 'Web for corpus building' (Hundt et al., 2007). The 'web as corpus' allows the researcher to create corpora from the Web directly. While, the 'Web for corpus building' needs the researcher to select manually the data to build offline corpora (Meinl, 2013). The current study was conducted by following the 'Web for corpus building' approach, as the data has been extracted manually from the Facebook status updates. In order to facilitate the collection of these status messages, a Facebook account was created. The sample for the current study is selected using a snowballing technique. Snowball sampling is often used to recruit and find new informants. With this approach the sample emerges through a process of reference from one user to the next (Denscombe, 2010). The researchers used this technique to find as many potential users related to the search terms. This technique is repeated until the required target sample size is achieved or until the additional data does not yield any new valuable information (Ahn et al. 2007). All the participants involved in the study are Arab Jordanians by birth. The sample was evenly balanced for gender, with 30 males and 30 females. All participants are from different disciplines including social science, computer science, engineering, economics and nursing.

It may be recalled that this study is an investigation into the humorous status updates posted by native Jordanian Arabic speakers on Facebook. In other words, the data of the current study was collected through Facebook status updates, which, according to Ellison (2007) & Wilson et al. (2012) display sufficient naturalistic behavioral data. These status updates could provide a rich source of information for researchers interested in understanding the linguistic features of online language. Through status updates, individuals not only express their feelings but also share information on their everyday life and activities as to what they are doing or what was going on in their lives at that moment (Ilyas & Qamar, 2012).

All undergraduate participants were studying at different universities that are located in either the southern or northern part of Jordan, namely, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Yarmouk University, Mutah University, Tafila Technical University and Al al-Bayt University.

youths, the findings indicate that out of 1535 status updates, only 210 status messages were identified as humorous. The reduction in humor content was due to social, economic and political situation in Jordan. In terms of gender differences and the humor use, the findings reveal that male participants made more humorous status updates compared to their female counterparts. This is in line with the observation by Force (2013) who found that women prefer someone who could make them laugh, while men desired someone who laughs at their jokes. Similarly, for the second research question that seeks to understand the pragmatic functions of humor in Facebook status updates, the findings reveal that the function of humor is governed by three pragmatic motives, namely, love, life and work. It has also been found that female participants were more interested in posting amusing romantic anecdotes, whereas, male participants were more interested in discussing humorous daily life activities. Both Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) submitted that in saying something, a speaker may be doing something or be performing an action. They postulated that communication is a series of communicative acts that are used systematically to achieve specific purposes. In the current study, when respondents posted their status updates, they were saying something. In other words, humor is a form of speech act in which the speakers convey their message in an indirect way.

Although this study has generally answered the given research questions, there is still a need to do more extensive research on the speech act of humor by Jordanians in order to have a clearer picture on the use of humor in the Jordanian context. The general findings may be constrained by the following limitations. First, this study concentrated particularly on a limited number of samples. Future research on usage purposes of Facebook could be broadened to involve a wider demographic base, both internationally and geographically, to further examine to what extent the findings are generalizable. Second, the researchers believe that this study should be conducted in other settings to further test the findings. Third, the speech act of humor could be also observed among Jordanian EFL learners. Regardless of these limitations, the findings of the current study provide some valuable insights. For example, the findings showed that Jordanians were more serious and less humorous since only 13% of the total status messages were identified as humorous. In contrast, other studies indicate approximately 21% of their data were humorous (Carr, et al. 2012; Nastri, et al. 2006).

The current study contributes to sociopragmatics studies and research on SNSs. It also presents methodological approaches for collecting data from online users. In this respect, Morkus (2009) states that the use of the SNSs (e.g., Facebook) in speech acts, research is pertinent as the language used in online interactions is totally different from either spoken or written language but it contains features of each, and therefore, it warrants examination in its own right. Morkus also claims that the use of digital medium is significant because there are new possibilities for collection of data that are not available in face-to-face communications. The current study, thus, adds an important contribution of how online humor is comprehended and produced by the Jordanian native speakers of Arabic. It has been noted that the humorous behaviors are always embedded and guided by the social norms of a particular culture and interacted with the daily life activities.

A content analysis of humorous status messages suggested that humorous texts revolved around three basic needs, namely, life, love and work. Therefore, these findings could assist in developing materials for specifically, teaching and learning pragmatics and sociolinguistics. The educational implications of the current study can also benefit designers of Arabic language

curricula to shed more light on the speech act of humor. Moreover, these findings can function as “situated-learning platforms” especially for newcomers who are entering Jordanian universities and undergoing socialization. What is considered as humor in one culture may not be considered similarly in another culture. Consequently, understanding and acquiring the Jordanian culture and the manner Jordanians express speech acts of humor through the Arabic language are necessary to improve the socialization process of the Jordanian society.

About the Authors:

Ala'eddin Banikalef is currently a PhD candidate in linguistics at the National University of Malaysia. His interests center on the Philosophy of Language and Philosophy of Mind. His current research interests include digital communications revolution, speech acts and their role in communication, and the influence of Social Networking Sites on language attitudes and sociolinguistic behavior.

Marlyna Maros (Ph.D) is Associate Professor of sociolinguistics at School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her major areas of expertise are sociolinguistics, sociopragmatics, and linguistics in education.

Ashinida Aladdin (Ph.D) is a Senior Lecturer at School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her research interests include psychological aspects of teaching and learning Arabic as foreign language, sociolinguistic and comparative studies between Arabic and Malay linguistics.

References

- Ahn, Y.Y., Han, S., Kwak, H., Moon, S., & Jeong, H. (2007). *Analysis of topological characteristics of huge online social networking services*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 16th international conference on World Wide Web.
- Alzoubi, Elham. (2012). *Linguistic Analysis of Humor in Jordanian Arabic Colloquial Animated Cartoon* (Doctor of Philosophy), Indiana University, USA. (3550775)
- Austin, J. (1962). *How to do things with words*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Baron, N. 2004. See you online gender issues in college student use of instant messaging. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*. 23 (4). 397-423.
- Berger, Arthur Asa. (1976). Anatomy of the Joke. *Journal of Communication*, 26(3), 113-115.
- Bjørnsson, J. (2011). *Egyptian romanized Arabic: a study of selected features from communication among Egyptian youth on Facebook*. Norway: University of OSLO MA thesis.
- Bouckaert, Peter. (2006). *Nowhere to Flee: The Perilous Situation of Palestinians in Iraq* (Vol. 18). Netherlands Human Rights Watch.
- Bressler, E & Sigal, B.(2006). The influence of humor on desirability. *Evolution and Human Behavior*. 27(1).29-39.

- Cahill, M & Elke, K. (2008). Factors in designing effective orthographies for unwritten languages. *SIL International*. <http://www-01.sil.org/silewp/2008/silewp2008-001.pdf> (accessed 5 January 2014).
- Carr, C, David B. Schrock & Patricia, D. (2009). Speech act analysis within social network sites Status messages. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Marriott, Chicago, 20 May 2009.
- Carr, C.T., Schrock, D.B., & Dauterman, P. (2012). Speech Acts Within Facebook Status Messages. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 31(2), 176-196.
- Carretero-Dios, Hugo, & Ruch, Willibald. (2010). Humor appreciation and sensation seeking: Invariance of findings across culture and assessment instrument? *Humor-International Journal of Humor Research*, 23(4), 427-445.
- Cooper, C. (2008). Elucidating the bonds of workplace humor: A relational process model. *Human Relations*. 61(8). 1087-1115.
- Crowston, Kevin, & Kammerer, Ericka. (1998). Communicative style and gender differences in computer-mediated communications. *Cyberghetto or cybertopia*, 185-203.
- Das, A. (2010). *Linguistic politeness and interpersonal ties among bengalis on the social network site Orkut: The bulge theory revisited*. USA: Indiana University dissertation.
- Das, B & Sahoo, Jyoti Shankar. 2011. Social networking sites—a critical analysis of its impact on personal and social life. *International journal of Business and social Science*. 2 (14). 222-228.
- Denscombe, Martyn. (2010). *The Good Research Guide: For Small-Scale Social Research Projects: For small-scale social research projects*. New York: McGraw-Hill International.
- DiMicco, J.M., & Millen, D.R. (2007). *Identity management: multiple presentations of self in facebook*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 2007 international ACM conference on Supporting group work.
- Duncan, W. J. (1982). Humor in management: Prospects for administrative practice and research. *Academy of Management Review*, 7(1), 136-142.
- Ellison, B & boyd, d. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer - Mediated Communication* .13 (1). 210-30.
- Freij, M. (2012). New comedians show Jordanians can appreciate a ‘good joke’. *The Jordanian Times*. <http://m.jordantimes.com/new-comedians-show-jordanians-can-appreciate-a-good-joke> (accessed 5 November 2013).
- Force, N. (2013). Would you prefer ‘someone who makes me laugh’ or ‘someone who laughs at my jokes’. *Psych Central*. <http://www.culturaliv.com/would-you-rather-have-someone-who-makes-me-laugh-or-someone-who-laughs-at-my-jokes/> (accessed 2 March 2014).
- Gardner, W, Cynthia L, Valerie, J & Megan Knowles. (2005). On the outside looking in: Loneliness and social monitoring. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 31 (11).1549-1560.
- Ghazal, M. (2012). Facebook penetration high and growing in Jordan — report. *The Jordan Times*. <http://jordantimes.com/facebook-penetration-high-and-growing-in-jordan---report> (accessed 20 January 2014).
- Gruner, R. (1978). *Understanding laughter: The workings of wit & humor*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Hofstede, G , Gert, J & Michael, M. (2005). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*, 3rd edn. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Hofstede, Gert Jan. (2009). Humour across cultures: an appetizer: Recuperado el.
- Huang, Kai-Ping, & Kuo, Wen-Ching. (2011). Does Humor Matter? From Organization Management Perspective. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 141-145.
- Hundt, Marianne, Nesselhauf, Nadja, & Biewer, Carolin. (2007). *Corpus linguistics and the web*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Ilyas, S & Qamar, K (2012). Facebook status updates: a speech act analysis. *Academic Research International*. 3 (2). 500-507
- Kloučková, B.V. (2010). *Language of the Internet: One Language Variety*. Brno: Masaryk University MA thesis.
- Locke, L. (2011). *Duels and duets: Why men and women talk so differently*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lynch, O.H. (2002). Humorous communication: Finding a place for humor in communication research. *Communication Theory*, 12(4), 423-445.
- Martin, G Neil, & Sullivan, Erin. (2013). Sense of humor across cultures: a comparison of British, Australian and American respondents. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 15(2), 375-384.
- Mcneill, T. (2008). Language, culture and communication in online learning 'Face work' in Facebook: An analysis of an online discourse community. http://online.education.ed.ac.uk/gallery/mcneill_facebook.pdf (accessed 10 March 2014).
- Meinl, Marja E. (2013). *Electronic Complaints: An Empirical Study on British English and German Complaints on eBay* (Vol. 18). Berlin: Frank & Timme GmbH.
- Morkus, N. 2009. The Realization of the Speech Act of Refusal in Egyptian Arabic by American Learners of Arabic as a Foreign Language. PhD.Thesis. University of South Florida.
- Nastri, J., Pena, J., & Hancock, J.T. (2006). The construction of away messages: A speech act analysis. *Journal of Computer - Mediated Communication*, 11(4), 1025-1045.
- Nemati, Azadeh, & Bayer, Jennifer Marie. (2007). Gender Differences in the Use of Linguistic Forms in the Speech of Men and Women: A Comparative Study of Persian and English. *Language in India*, 7(9), 1-16.
- Newman, Matthew L, Groom, Carla J, Handelman, Lori D, & Pennebaker, James W. (2008). Gender differences in language use: An analysis of 14,000 text samples. *Discourse Processes*, 45(3), 211-236.
- Norricks, N.R., & Chiaro, D. (2009). *Humor in interaction* (Vol. 182): Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Samson, Andrea C, & Gross, James J. (2012). Humour as emotion regulation: The differential consequences of negative versus positive humour. *Cognition & emotion*, 26(2), 375-384.
- Samson, Andrea C, Huber, Oswald, & Ruch, Willibald. (2013). Seven decades after Hans Asperger's observations: A comprehensive study of humor in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Humor*, 26(3), 441-460.
- Searle, J.R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*: Cambridge university press.
- Shifman, Limor, & Lemish, Dafna. (2010). Between feminism and fun (ny) mism: Analysing gender in popular internet humour. *Information, Communication & Society*, 13(6), 870-891.

- Tracy, Sarah J, Myers, Karen K, & Scott, Clifton W. (2006). Cracking jokes and crafting selves: Sensemaking and identity management among human service workers. *Communication Monographs*, 73(3), 283-308.
- Wilson, R.E., Gosling, S.D., & Graham, L.T. (2012). A review of Facebook research in the social sciences. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7(3), 203-220.
- Winick, Charles. (1976). The Social Contexts of Humor. *Journal of Communication*, 26(3), 124-128.