

Linguistic Analysis of Humor in Jordanian Arabic among Young Jordanians Facebookers

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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,