

Rhetorical Devices and Humor by Jordanian Social Media Users During COVID-19 Pandemic (June 2022)

Mahmoud A. Al-Qudah

Department of Arts, Princess Sumaya University for Technology, Amman, Jordan

Shereen M. Abu Hait

Department of Linguistics, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Abstract—The current study examines the deployment of the rhetorical strategies found in 25 jokes that are used by Jordanian social media users after the emergence of COVID-19 during the months of March until September in the year 2020. The data were purposively selected from different social media, like Facebook and WhatsApp. The study analyzed how the rhetorical strategies are used in jokes to generate humor, depending on the context of humor. Therefore, the present study analyzed the corpus qualitatively, and it adopted Berger's rhetorical techniques (1993) that deal with language and logic for analysis purposes. The findings of the present research indicated that a collection of rhetorical strategies were utilized to highlight several political, social, and psychological themes that were prominent in the Jordanian society during the COVID-19 pandemic. These rhetorical strategies were employed to enact humor. According to the results of the study, Jordanian social media users develop humor by employing strategies such as satire, pun, irony, exaggeration, definition, ignorance, rigidity, disappointment, allusion, and absurdity in an attempt to cause laughter.

Index Terms—rhetorical humor, social media, COVID-19, Jordan, psychology

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite the difficult circumstances that Jordan has recently experienced to confront the new coronavirus, humor has not been absent from social media platforms. The Jordanian society has moved dramatically to humor during the COVID-19 pandemic as a source of alleviation and protest against the decisions of the officials in the government that resulted in economic collapse among the middle and poor classes. Consequently, humor was a means of dissatisfaction with the current situation, and since people cannot do anything but showing a verbal critique, so they resorted to sarcasm. Humor also appears to come in diverse attitudes, such as bitter, droll, or dark.

However, humor is directly or indirectly related to laughter since humorous jokes make people laugh, so the main facet of humor is laughter (Attardo, 1994). Despite the countless efforts to determine a definition for humor, it remains unresolved (Latta, 1998). By connecting the ideas of discursive psychology and psychoanalysis, it seems that ridicule contributes to the formation of humor (Billig, 2002, p.30). However, one of the most overlooked parts of psychological humor study is the examination of the "funny" and its relationship to related attributes. However, irony, satire, sarcasm, and ridicule are all strategies to enact humor, depending on how narrow or broad we define it. According to Berger (2013), there are three theories that are used to explain humor and its relation to the human social life, and they also portray psychoanalysis perspectives. The humor theories that explain the tendency to humor are: Superiority Theory, Incongruity Theory, and Relief Theory. The Theory of Superiority is a theory of ridicule as it implies that laughter is a product of frustration and failure, and is linked to psychological theory (Billig, 2002, p.39). In brief, our laughter reflects feelings of superiority over someone, or over an old state of being. In contrast, the Incongruity Theory is the second theory for understanding humor. Instead of being captured by an emotion of superiority and degradation which result in a shift of the moral attitude, it sets out a strictly analytical mindset, a change of mind-activity. According to the second hypothesis, the laughter arises from a peculiar influence on our mental system (Sully, 1902, p.125). The Relief Theory, along with the Incongruity Theory, surpasses the propositions raised in the Superiority Theory. This theory states that humor, wit, or comic releases the nervous energy. Pertaining to this theory, laughter releases all repressed emotions and feelings, so it is like "a sigh of relief" (Morreall, 1987).

II. THEORIES OF HUMOR

Freud (as cited in Ruch, 1998) distinguished three categories of laughter experience: joke, comic, and humor. Jokes stimulate certain cognitive techniques, like displacement, concentration, and fusion. Consequently, jokes release psychological stresses. Comic is the non-verbal source of laughter, such as slapstick which involves the release of the mental energy by using the technique of opposition to expectation technique. However, humor takes place when the

person is exposed to negative emotions like fear, sadness, or anger, but the incongruous elements that are found in these situations alter the negative feelings into positive ones. In short, humor is created when the person is exposed to a situation or a stimulus that has a funny context, such as jokes or cartoons.

There should be a linguistic and communicative competence in order to understand humor. However, the psychology process is also essential to provide a concrete perception of the experience of humor. The cognitive process enables the speaker to understand the text and identify the conflict while the communicative view is responsible for the familiarity of the speaker with different types of communication, such as humor. The speaker's experience constitutes the texts and oppositions, and the familiarity with specific techniques of humor (Raskin, 2007). We must consider the cognitive process, emotional reactions, and behaviors that are involved in creating well-structured humor (Ruch, 1998).

III. HUMOR IN SOCIAL MEDIA

People all over the world created and shared thousands of uplifting, humorous media messages during the first episode of the corona crisis. The "memes," texts, images, videos, and other content types, spread quickly through social networks, often commenting critically on social or political phenomena (Shifman, 2014). The spread of the COVID-19 sparked an outpouring of corona jokes on social media around the world. However, the content of these jokes made in different countries sounded similar (Kuipers, 2020), and the interpretation of this is that people all over the world handled the same quarantine-related issues. The majority of jokes were about the exasperations and frustrations that are caused because of the quarantine. As a result, corona jokes tended to be cheerful. El Khachab (2017) examined how Facebook users in Egypt utilize humor to criticize political officials; thus, humor is enacted through using hyperbole. Davison, as mentioned in Mikhalkova et al. (2020, p.356), defines memes from online sources as "An Internet meme is a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission."

IV. RHETORICAL HUMOR

Berger's techniques are classified into four categories: language, logic, identity, and action. Each category comprises the rhetorical techniques used to analyze humor. However, the current study found out that ten rhetorical strategies, which are related to language and logic, were used to enact humor, and they are allusion, definition, exaggeration, irony, pun, satire, absurdity, disappointment, ignorance, and rigidity. Pertaining to language, allusion correlates to social and political situations that prompt us to recollect previously made faults or errors. A comic definition is linked to hyperbole and insults. Some manipulation is involved since definitions render seriousness. An unexpected whimsical or comic impact is shown when the reader or listener expects seriousness in the hilarious definition. Irony is showing a concession to expectation, while pun is the essence of playing on word structures. Criticizing a person or a situation by using ridicule and exaggeration is satire. The second aspect is logic. Humor's main function is laughter, so this function can be maintained if the joke texts are incongruous. Absurdity is the illogical action or context. Sometimes humor is used to express disappointment towards recent situations or actions. If the joke reveals naivety; then, this strategy is called ignorance. Rigidity deals with interpreting situations literally, yet it is more than just a literal reading of the written word. People find it amusing to make fun of the clumsy individuals who are inflexible in their approach to life. It is the stoicism, the rigidity, and the single-mindedness of this person that can be found so hilarious. Those who are so strict that they end up creating bizarre circumstances for themselves and others are seen as pompous. Finally, the rhetoric humor is achieved if the joke reveals characteristics of uncertainty and indecisiveness, then this is called rigidity (Berger, 1993, p.18-41).

With reference to Berger's rhetorical strategies (1993), Lutfi (2017) concentrated on the dark humor section of Reddit which is an American social news forum and discussion website. This study explains the way in which online humor expresses the rationale of racism: "social inclusion and exclusion". Rochmawati (2017) applied Berger's rhetorical techniques (1993) along with other pragmatic frameworks to dissect the humor of the written jokes, and she found out that there are five rhetorical strategies that are mainly used to create humor and they are: irony/sarcasm, exaggeration, misunderstanding, satire, and puns. Using Berger's (1993) theory of rhetorical strategies of humor, Heidari-Shahreza (2017) discovered that the Persian stand-up comedy uses allusions, irony, humor, repartee, mockery, and pun to produce laughter. Pertaining to humor in the Jordanian society, Banikhalef et al.'s study (2014) provides an insight into the speech act of humor in Jordanian Arabic used by Jordanian Facebook users, and the analysis adopted a socio-pragmatic discipline.

V. COVID-19 HUMOR

According to Hussein and Aljamili (2020), social networking in Jordan aided in alleviating pandemic anxieties. The researchers used the categorization of the social semiotics approach that includes five processes: action, reaction, verbal, mental, and conversion processes, to analyze the memes. The first part of the study tackled responses from 1274 participants who were asked to answer questions about comedy and to share their thoughts on a list of 20 cartoon characters that were provided as an attachment to the survey. A socio-semiotic analysis of COVID-19-related cartoons and memes on Jordanian social media is intended to show how comedy may be utilized to soothe the gloomy atmosphere brought on by the pandemic.

According to Strick's study (2021), media messages with funny or moving content affect positive and negative emotions in the pandemic (2021). According to Olah and Ford (2021), who studied the relationship between humor and people's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, a good sense of humor is connected with reduced levels of negative emotions, and the adoption of recommended preventative measures.

Chlopicki and Brzozowska (2021) studied Polish COVID-19 memes. They found the humor-inducing processes underlying their intricacy, and the socialist memories they recall in contrast to COVID-19. Chlopicki and Brzozowska (2021) discovered numerous levels and changes in perspectives and attitudes within meme cycles. To understand sophisticated humor, consider how characters and the narrator attribute desire, belief, and intention (purpose) to real events or circumstances.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

A. *The Corpus*

This is a corpus-driven study that comprises 174 jokes about the COVID-19 pandemic. Some jokes were purposively selected from different social media, like Facebook and WhatsApp from March until September 2020. Then, the collected data were analyzed, using a qualitative analysis framework. The results were compared to Berger's rhetorical devices (1993). Jokes on the COVID-19 pandemic were chosen to address social and political phenomena that are associated with the presence of this pandemic. This disease has affected the Jordanian community in terms of their financial status and social convergence, so people generated these jokes to mitigate the crisis they have experienced, and this situation proves that laughter is the best medicine at a time of crisis.

B. *Theoretical Framework*

The current study used Berger's (1993) rhetorical techniques to find out how humor is enacted in the jokes about the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher reached to the conclusion that allusion, exaggeration, irony, puns, satire, definition, absurdity, disappointment, ignorance, and rigidity were used to formulate humor after classifying the data in terms of Berger's (1993) domains of rhetoric which are language and logic.

C. *Qualitative Analysis*

In this section, each rhetorical technique is presented and examples taken from the corpus were analyzed to show how humor was enacted in social media namely, WhatsApp and Facebook.

(a). *Satire*

Berger (1993) defines satire as a rhetorical technique of humor that may include other techniques such as hyperbole, mockery, and criticism. He inserts that a comedian can use this technique to poke fun at people, institutions, and events. The data have illustrated that satire has been the most commonly used to enact humor.

1. *Script 1*

امي بلشت تخترع اختراعات حماية جديدة ملح و خل و قشر ليمون و مدري شو اتطورت من مرحلة التعقيم لمرحلة تنبيل الفيروس .

Script 1 Translation: My mother started inventing new protection formulas: salt, vinegar, peeled limo, and other things that I have no clue about. The process has evolved from the sterilization stage to the stage of seasoning the virus.

Script 1 Context: This joke comments on the people who follow treatments that are not based on a medical therapy. It shows how people are confused about the cure for the coronavirus. Since this disease is a novelty worldwide, people are intrusive regarding the treatment of COVID-19 to the extent that it shows their gullibility.

Script 1 Message: Satire is employed to poke fun at domestic ideology pertaining to the cure for such a disease. This strategy shows the naivety of people and their perplexity towards finding a therapy that is protective as the speaker said "The process has evolved from the sterilization stage to the stage of seasoning the virus." As a result, people are straying away from finding medicine due to the lack of scientific findings when COVID-19 first emerged.

2. *Script 2*

الاردن اعلنت اول حالة بعدين تونس و السعودية هو فايروس كورونا و الا هلال رمضان!

Script 2 Translation: Jordan announced the first case of Corona, and then Tunisia, so did Saudi Arabia. Is it the Coronavirus or Ramadan?

Script 2 Context: The situation renders the illogical stream of the COVID-19 pandemic according to the viewpoint of the speaker. The spread of the disease was drastic and rapid.

Script 2 Message: In script 2, the speaker uses satire to criticize the quality of news in social media which instills fearsome among people. It also attacks the unawareness of people as they have not taken the right precautions that are required to avoid the spread of this disease. It seems that these governments are bragging about having the virus instead of attempting to secure the citizens, which is similar to the situation in which countries announce the presence of the crescent in the sky as a sign of the time of fasting. This juxtaposition is used to show the ambivalence of feeling during the pandemic. This parody was not accepted.

3. *Script 3*

رسالة من احدى الامهات: ما في داعي تعطلوا المدارس احجروا على الطلاب داخل المدارس و احنا بنزورهم كل اسبوعين.

Script 3 Translation: A message from one of the mothers: There is no need to disrupt schools, detain the students inside the schools, and we will visit them every two weeks.

Script 3 Context: The government around the globe decided to commence the online learning as an attempt to restrain the disease from spreading. This decision caused many psychological traumas among family members for many reasons.

Script 3 Message: Satire is used to show despair and frustration due to this forlorn decision. The speaker is criticizing the decision that was taken by the government. This script portrays the image of confinement and imprisonment as illustrated in this instance "we will visit them every two weeks". Satire depicts the exasperation of the parents due to decisions that abstain people from living normally.

(b). Irony

According to Berger (1993), a contrast between two aspects creates irony. Popular humor relies heavily on ironic circumstances. The use of situational irony is commonly used in comedy.

1. Script 1

و كنت اعشق قبلاً لحن عطستها فصرت ان عطست ينتابني الهلع الشاعر ابو كمامة الكوروني .

Script 1 Translation: And I used to love the melody of her sneezing until I became afraid if she sneezes.

The poet: The Mask of Coronian.

Script 1 Context: People became intimidated if someone sneezes or coughs since these are considered as symptoms of COVID-19. This joke contrasts the attitudes of people before and after the emergence of COVID-19.

Script 1 Message: The poem is ironic because it includes contrasting situations that show people's attitudes before the occurrence of COVID-19 as opposed to the attitudes during COVID-19. For instance, the speaker in " و كنت اعشق قبلاً لحن عطستها" - "And I used to love the melody of her sneezing" - is metaphorically comparing his lover's sneeze to music; however, the shift in attitude and tone has changed in "فصرت ان عطست ينتابني الهلع الشاعر" - "until I became afraid if she sneezes". Thus, the pandemic has affected the emotions and attitudes because fearsome of infection is compelling, and it has become an obsession.

2. Script 2

يا رجل دخلت البلد هلكوني اشاعات بس منيح صيت غنى و لا صيت فقر!!

Script 2 Translation: Oh man! Once I entered the country, I became the source of all rumors; however, it is better to become famous and popular than to become unknown!

Script 2 Context: People used to spread information about COVID-19, which is a vague disease, through social media without validating the source, which caused anxiety and apprehension.

Script 2 Message: The personification of the virus is created to show irony of the situation in which people spread false information about coronavirus that they are not knowledgeable about.

3. Script 3

بتحكيلك ماما قومي ارقصي قدام ام علي ابنها تاجر كمامات .

Script 3 Translation: Mama is telling you to get up and dance in front of Ali's mother because her son is a mask dealer.

Script 3 Context: To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the authority enforced the citizens to wear masks whenever they intended to go outdoors. Due to the high demand for masks, their prices boosted dramatically.

Script 3 Message: In this script, the speaker is telling her sister to dance in front of Ali's mother because he sells masks - "قومي ارقصي قدام ام علي ابنها تاجر كمامات." This statement is ironic as it contradicts a social situation before the occurrence of COVID-19 in which families preferred to wed their daughters to a doctor, an engineer, or a wealthy businessman. In this case, the mask represents a social need for people to be safe and secure.

(c). Pun

Berger (1993) inserts that "a pun can be seen to be a signifier that stands for two signified entities." In pun, there is a play on meaning." (p 44).

1. Script 1

مسلسلات رمضان 2020: بقعة كورونا، الكورونا المتساقطة ، عندما ينتشر الفيروس، الفيروسات الاربعة، ردلي كمامتي(الجزء الاول) ،الكمامة الضائعة،العشق بالحجر الصحي ،ربيع بلا كمامة ،لن اعطس في وجه ابي!

Script 1 Translation: Ramadan 2020 series: Corona Spot, the Falling Corona, When the Virus Spreads, the Four Viruses, Bring Back my Face Mask (first part), the Lost Mask, the Love in the Quarantine, Spring without a Mask, I will not sneeze in my Father's Face!

Script 1 Context: Film production companies usually launch their series during the month of Ramadan because people usually spend more time at home, fasting and praying. It somewhat resembles the situation during the pandemic as people were enforced to stay indoors to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Script 1 Message: Pun is achieved when the titles of these series were altered to fit in with the current situation of COVID-19. It shows how this disease controls our lives. Not only did this disease separate us from the community, but also it inflicted on our daily practices.

2. Script 2

ملعون هالحرسي هالفيروس تقول مدعي عام اقل شي عندو توقيف 14 يوم على ذمة التعقيم !

Script 2 Translation: God damn this menacing virus, it is acting as the public prosecutor who detains people for 14 days on remand of sterilization!

Script 2 Context: The health protocol in Jordan imposes on people who are infected with the virus to stay indoors for 14 days. The 14-day quarantine is personified as a prosecutor who keeps people under control when they break the law to investigate the case.

Script 2 Message: Detaching people from mingling with each other because of infection is similar to the detainment of people when they do not abide by the law. Pun, which is illustrated in this example "sterilization" instead of "investigation", is used to show the similarities between both circumstances in two different scenarios.

3. Script 3

انطموفالدار مضاد لفيروس كورونا 30 حبة يصرف بوصفة وطنية ، 30 ملغ عدماستهتارون و 30 ملغ انتماء وطنون و 30 ملغ احترامقانون

Script 3 Translation: 30 tablets of Staying at home Anti-Coronavirus, dispensed with a national prescription, 30 mg of carefulness, 30 mg of patriotism, and 30 mg of abiding by the law.

Script 3 Context: Jordanian people were perplexed about the novelty of COVID-19 since it is incurable, and no vaccines were created to protect people from this disease.

Script 3 Message: Pun is employed here to emphasize the measurements of commitment, and to assure people that if they follow the values mentioned in this script, people will remain safe. This pun is considered a call for action to encourage people to act in a disciplined way in order to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.

(d). Allusion

Berger (1993) defined allusion as a direct or indirect reference to a person, place, or event. The allusion to personages is employed to refer to people who contributed to the spread of COVID-19 in Jordan.

1. Script 1

مشاهير زمن كورونا: الحيارى ، تامر ، صبحي، ممرضة البشير ، دكتور الرمثا ، عريس اربيد، عريس الحظر، الخضرجي.

Script 1 Translation: The Celebrities of Corona time: Al-Hiyari, Tamer, Subhi, a nurse working at Al-Bashir, a doctor from Ramtha, the groom from Irbid, the groom who caused the ban, the greengrocer.

Script 1 Context: When people do not abide by the laws of quarantine, detrimental consequences will happen, and it will affect the entire society.

Script 1 Message: People, like the nurse, Al-Hiyari, and others mentioned in this script caused the quarantine because they have been infected with COVID-19. Some had not followed precautionary measurements to avoid COVID-19 from spreading. These people were referred to as celebrities because they were famous figures during the pandemic.

2. Script 2

الجهات المصرح له بالتجول هي : القوات المسلحة ، الدفاع المدني،قوات الامن العام،الحيارى.

Script 2 Translation: The authorized bodies to roam are: the armed forces, civil defense, public security forces, and Al-Hiyari. Script 2 Context: Al-Hiyari, who came from Italy to Jordan, was the first case of COVID-19 in Jordan.

Script 2 Message: Al-Hiyari was a prominent figure during the pandemic since all Jordanians were interested to be acquainted with the symptoms of this mysterious disease. This allusion achieves humor since this script compares Al-Hiyari to the army bodies as they sustain peace and security. When Al-Hiyari showed on TV, he comforted people, and told them that this disease does not signal the end of the world.

(e). Definition

Definition is a rhetorical device that promotes the application of other strategies, such as insult or exaggeration. Additionally, definition is tricky since it exposes the reader or listener to a serious situation, then, it shifts the tone towards hilariousness. However, definition was one of the least used techniques to enact humor (Berger, 1993).

1. Script 1

لتجنب الاصابة بكورونا عليك بالاتي: تجنب الاماكن المزدحمة مثل الدوام، تجنب الاماكن اللي مالها داعي مثل الدوام،تجنب الاماكن المغلقة مثل الدوام.

Script 1 Translation: To avoid infection with Corona, you should do the following: Avoid crowded places such as work, avoid places that are not necessary, such as work, and avoid closed places such as work.

Script 1 Context: During the COVID-19 pandemic, people must follow instructions issued by the government to stop spreading the virus.

Script 1 Message: This script initiates the measurements that each citizen must abide by to avoid spreading COVID-19; however, at the end of each clause, the repetition of "مثل الدوام" - "such as work" - emphasizes the intention of the

speaker which implies that work must be completely avoided at any point during the pandemic. The focus on work as a place for catching the disease is deliberately presented to serve the speaker's goal.

2. Script 2

تعريف العولمة: واحد يأكل خفاش بالصين و يقطعك من الدخان في الرصيفة .

Script 2 Translation: Definition of globalization: someone eats a bat in China, and cuts you off from cigarettes in Russeifa.

Script 2 Context: COVID-19 emerged in Wuhan, China, in mid of December, but because of false mitigation, the virus lunatically spread globally, leaving the government with one option which was to lockdown.

Script 2 Message: The definition of globalization renders hyperbole; in other words, Health organizations in Wuhan have held the responsibility for spreading this unknown disease. The definition used in this script indicates that all cities in Jordan, referring only to "Russeifa" as an example, have been affected by the irresponsibility of the authority in Wuhan.

(f). Exaggeration

Berger (1993) referred to exaggeration as an overstatement that must be coupled with other devices, like ridicule to achieve humor. Basically, exaggeration digresses away from the truth.

1. Script 1

فايروس كورونا صار مثل المخدرات الي يصيدوا لازم يقولهم كل الاسماء يلي تعامل معهم.

Script 1 Translation: Coronavirus has become like drugs; if someone is infected with corona, all the names of those who dealt with the person must be told.

Script 1 Context: When an individual was infected with COVID-19, all other people who contacted him/her must do the PCR to make sure that they did not catch Coronavirus, and the ones who were infected must be quarantined for 14 days.

Script 1 Message: The exaggeration of comparing people who were infected with COVID-19 to drug dealers is highly marked to show the seriousness of the situation; however, the word "يصيدوا" - "catch him" is an overstatement to render a comic effect.

2. Script 2

مطلوب كروز دخان اي نوع البدل دونم ارض بعبدون .

Script 2 Translation: A bartering with an acre of land in Abdoun with a set of packs of cigarettes, of any type, is offered. Script 2 Context: People were allowed to buy the commodities within a specific interval of time; thus, some goods, like cigarettes, were highly demanded, so these items were scarcely found in the market

Script 2 Message: The bargain made in this script violates the truth because no one would trade his/her land- a land in Abdoun is extremely expensive-for a packet of cigarettes. These elements discussed achieve exaggeration as it is tied with irrationality.

(g). Absurdity

According to Berger (1993), absurdity may be divided into two categories: nonsense and bewilderment. Absurdity seems to be straightforward; nevertheless, the consequences of absurdity are very complex. Absurdity must make light of the standards of logic and reason.

1. Script 1

اكتشاف عاجل لفيروس كورونا ! ثلاث ايام تشرب مي و غسل و حامض ، و رابع يوم تشرب مي و غسل، يبطلع الفيروس يسالك وين الحامض بتضره على راسه ويموت.

Script 1 Translation: An urgent discovery of the Coronavirus: You drink water, honey, and lemonade for three days, and on the fourth day, you drink only water and honey, so the virus comes out to ask you about the lemonade, then you hit it on the head and it dies.

Script 1 Context: Because of the novelty of the disease, people were creating ingredients to save themselves from getting the infection.

Script 1 Message: This script shows absurdity as it mixes reasoning premises with illogical interpretation. The phrase "An urgent discovery of the Coronavirus" - gives a sense of seriousness and urgency, but the clause "so the virus comes out to ask you about the lemonade, then you hit it on the head and it dies" shows an illogical inference or conclusion.

2. Script 2

اليوم فاتوا عالينك اثنين حاطين كامامات الناس خافت بس لما عرفت انهم حرامية ارتاحوا.

Script 2 Translation: Today, two guys with masks walked into the bank, so the people were in fear, but when everybody knew they were thieves, they were relieved.

Script 2 Context: Anxiety about possible illness and death, as well as financial distress, were all common reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic, which left many people feeling anxious and fearful.

Script 2 Message: After the emergence of COVID-19, people's stress and anxiety revolved around one concept: they do not want to catch the infection. In this script, the logical premises were achieved in this illustration "اليوم فاتوا عالينك" "Today, two guys with masks walked in the bank, so the people were in fear, but..."; however, "بس" - "but" shifts the tone from rationale to nonsense. Thus, absurdity is implemented.

3. Script 3

ابن النايمة الصيني لو عصر نص ليمونة على شوربة الخفاش شو كان خسر ضيعنا الله لا يوفقه.

Script 3 Translation: If the stupid Chinese man squeezed half a lemon on the bat soup, what would he have lost? God may not reward him!

Script 3 Context: The origins of COVID-19 viral transmission to humans remain a mystery. However, people believe that COVID-19 was developed from SARS that has been found in some species of bats in China.

Script 3 Message: The absurdity is accomplished when the speaker proposes an idea to use lemonade to kill the Coronavirus, and this idea would have ended the virus from the transmission. The conceptualization of this script is considered a violation of logic.

(h). Disappointment

According to Berger (1993), the tactic of disappointment entails deluding people about something, then, denying the logical consequence they have anticipated.

1. Script 1

كنت احب احضر فلم بيحكي عن نهاية العالم ، فيضانات و اوبئة و نهاية البشر ، ولا مره فكرت انو رح اشارك بالفلم شخصيا.

Script 1 Translation: I used to love to attend films that talked about the end of the world, floods, plagues, and the end of mankind, but I never once thought that I was going to participate in the film personally.

Script 1 Context: the suppression that resulted from lockdowns and quarantine led to psychological traumas and depression.

Script 1 Message: The speaker expresses his/her preferences "كنت احب احضر فلم بيحكي عن نهاية العالم ، فيضانات و اوبئة و نهاية البشر" - "I used to love to attend films that talked about the end of the world, floods, plagues, and the end of mankind"; while the word "ولا مره...." - "but I never..." establishes the contrast to what has been proposed earlier. This technique of denying the proposition stated before is the source of disappointment.

2. Script 2

كان لما واحد يعطس قدامنا واحد نقول له: يرحمك الله اليوم صاروا يقولوا له : الله لا يوفقك.

Script 2 Translation: We used to say to someone who sneezes in front of us: God bless you, but today, they started saying to him: God may not reward you well.

Script 2 Context: Social distancing causes emotional detachments and social inactivity. The intimidation towards coronavirus infection forced people to act differently as compared to what they used to do before the pandemic.

Script 2 Message: In this script, the attitude of the first part contradicts the second reaction. For example, this illustration "كان لما واحد يعطس قدامنا واحد نقول له: يرحمك الله" - "We used to say to someone who sneezes in front of us: God bless you" - clarified an attitude that people used to do when they sneeze. However, the second chunk "الله لا يوفقك" - "God may not reward you" - reveals the reverse which conveys a contradictory reaction after the emergence of COVID-19.

(i). Ignorance

Berger (1993) establishes a clear connection between stupidity and humor. When the foolishness is exposed, then a comic effect is created.

1. Script 1

عم فكر جيب ميزان ثاني رايبين احسن من راي .

Script 1 Translation: I am thinking of buying another weight scale. Two heads are better than one.

Script 1 Context: Because of boredom and routine, people's appetite increased.

Script 1 Message: The stupidity (ignorance) is shown as the speaker in this script thinks to use another scale. Such a decision reveals how naïve this person is because another scale will give the same measurement.

2. Script 2

عم تعذبك مرتك ؟ رن على وزارة الصحة و بلغ انو عليها حرارة و يمكن كورونا الحجز 14 يوم ، الله يقدرنا على فعل الخير .

Script 2 Translation: If your wife tortures you, call the Ministry of Health and tell them that she has a fever and you suspect that she is infected with corona; she will be detained for 14 days. May God reward us well

Script 2 Context: The lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the social relationships between listless husbands and wives because of tedious routines that resulted in tension at home.

Script 2 Message: The naivety (ignorance) implied in the suggestion of calling the officials in the Ministry of Health - "رن على وزارة الصحة" - claim that the wife is infected with COVID-19, and the purpose is to get rid of the wife since she annoys her husband. The goal is also an illustration of gullibility.

3. Script 3

المصاب بالانفلونزا العادية لا يصاب بكورونا المصدر : ابو محمود البليط قال لي مفيش فيروس بيرضى يخش على فيروس ثاني !

Script 3 Translation: A person with regular influenza does not get corona. Source: Abu Mahmoud who works in tiling told me that viruses do not penetrate each other!

Script 3 Context: Because of the uniqueness of COVID-19, logical fallacy and fake information are dispersed in search of something that can soothe people's agonies.

Script 3 Message: The gullibility is not in the false information represented in this example "المصاب بالانفلونزا العادية لا يصاب بكورونا" - "A person with regular influenza does not get corona"; it is expressed in the second part as the source of information is a builder "بليط" – who is not entitled to provide people with any scientific propositions since he is an expert in this field.

(j). Rigidity

Berger (1993) states that people find it funny to mock those who are clumsy and rigid in their attitudes to life. Stubbornness and selfishness are what make the situation humorous.

1. Script 1

هلا اذا صار هزه ارضية و كورونا مع بعض بنطلع لبرا والا بنفوت لجوا ..؟ اللي بيجاوب صح بيتاهل معنا لمرحلة البركان .

Script 1 Translation: If an earthquake and a corona occurred together, would we go out on land, or stay inside? Whoever gets the right answer will move on to the level of the volcano.

Script 1 Context: COVID-19 is considered a catastrophe since it affected people in terms of their financial, economic, and personal conditions.

Script 1 Message: The indecisiveness revealed in this example is eccentric and rigid. The assumption of the occurrence of an earthquake, along with the existence of COVID-19 shows stiffness of ideas which is the core of rigidity as a technique to enact humor.

2. Script 2

واحد اخذ مرتو راح يحللها كورونا بعد يومين حاكوا و قالوله التقرير تبع مرتك تخريط مع تقرير ثاني لحالة زهايمر و نحنا هلا مو عارفين عندها كورونا و الا زهايمر قالهم طيب انا شو المفروض اعمل ؟ قالوله: خدها و روح فيها لمكان بعيد عن البيت واتركها و اذا عرفت ترجع البيت لحالها لا تفتحلها .

Script 2 Translation: Someone took his wife to do the PCR test, after two days the medical staff told him that the medical report of his wife was mixed up with a second report on the case of Alzheimer's, and we did not know about the results whether it is Corona or Alzheimer, so he said to them: Ok, what am I supposed to do? They said to him: Take her and go with her to a place far from the house and leave her, and if she knows the way, she will return home, but do not open the door to her.

Script 2 Context: The COVID-19 epidemic had a devastating influence on the psychological well-being of people. Dissatisfaction, loneliness, and anxiety about the future were among the most often expressed feelings.

Script 2 Message: The selfishness shown in this script is the representation of rigidity. The idea of leaving the wife in a far place to show her exact illness is eccentric as illustrated in this example "خدها و روح فيها لمكان بعيد عن البيت واتركها" - "Take her and go with her to a place far from the house and leave her." This possibility shows both the stiffness and inflexibility of the action required to be done.

VII. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The current study found that humor is achieved by using Berger's (1993) rhetorical techniques. The researcher reached to the conclusion that humor is achieved through using the following rhetorical devices: allusion, exaggeration, irony, puns, satire, definition, absurdity, disappointment, ignorance, and rigidity.

Jordanian social media users employed satire, pun, definition, irony, ignorance, absurdity, exaggeration, disappointment, rigidity, and allusion during the COVID-19 epidemic. In terms of satire, COVID-19 jokes employed this method to generate lighter comedy that criticizes social and governmental concerns as well as the behaviors of Jordanians during the epidemic. Puns are used to make jokes using words that have lexical ambiguity that might lead to humorous misinterpretations. In contrast, humor uses exaggeration or overstatement to critique social practices and political concerns during COVID-19. Irony; on the other hand, is used to present the truth in a comical manner. Unexpected definitions create humor. Rigidity conveys comedy by highlighting the speakers' tenacity. Allusions refer to the flaws and absurd behaviors of famous people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Disappointment deconstructs the anticipated logical consequence, and ignorance-based humor associates embarrassment with gullibility. Finally, absurdity creates humor by twisting logic and reasoning.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The present research explored the rhetorical strategies of humor employed in 25 jokes shared on WhatsApp and Facebook by Jordanian users from March to September in the year 2020, as well as the role of rhetorical strategies in enacting humor. The results of the current study demonstrated that a collection of devices were used to discuss a variety

of political, social, and psychological issues that were prevalent in the Jordanian culture during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the findings of the research, Jordanian social media users produce humor by using techniques such as satire, pun, irony, exaggeration, definition, ignorance, rigidity, disappointment, allusion, and absurdity in an effort to make their audiences laugh.

APPENDIX

Number	Script	Translation	Rhetorical Device
1.	امي بلشت تخرع اختراعات حماية جديدة ملح و خل و قشر ليمون و مدري شو اتطورت من مرحلة التعقيم لمرحلة تنبيل الفيروس .	My mother started inventing new protection formulas: salt, vinegar and peeled limo, and other things that I have no clue about. The process has evolved from the sterilization stage to the stage of seasoning the virus.	Satire
2.	الاردن اعلنت اول حالة بعدين تونس و السعودية هو فايروس كورونا و الا هلال رمضان!	Jordan announced the first case of Corona, and then Tunisia, so did Saudi Arabia. Is it Corona virus or Ramadan?	
3.	رسالة من احدى الامهات: ما في داعي تعطلوا المدارس احجروا على الطلاب داخل المدارس و احنا بنزورهم كل اسبوعين.	A message from one of the mothers: There is no need to disrupt schools, detain the students inside the schools, and we will visit them every two weeks.	
4.	و كنت اعشق قبلاً لحن عطستها فصرت ان عطست ينتابني الهلع الشاعر ابو كمامة الكوروني .	And I used to love the melody of her sneezing, until I became afraid if she sneezes. The poet: The Mask of Coronian.	Irony
5.	يا رجل دخلت البلد هلكوني اشاعات بس منيح صبت غنى و لا صبت فقر!!	Oh man! Once I entered the country, I became the source of all rumors; however, it is better to become famous and popular than to become unknown!	
6.	بتحكيلك ماما قومي ارقصي قدام ام علي ابنها تاجر كمامات .	Mama is telling you to get up and dance in front of Ali's mother because her son is a mask dealer.	
7.	مسلسلات رمضان2020: بقعة كورونا، الكورونا المتساقطة، عندما ينتشر الفيروس، الفيروسات الاربعة، ردلي كمامتي(الجزء الاول)، الكمامة الضائعة، العشق بالحجر الصحي، ربيع بلا كمامة، لن اعطس في وجه ابي!	Ramadan 2020 series: Corona Spot, the Falling Corona, When the Virus Spreads, the Four Viruses, Bring Back my Face Mask (first part), the Lost Mask, the Love in the Quarantine, Spring without a Mask, I will not sneeze in my Father's Face!	Pun
8.	ملعون هالحرسى هالفيروس تقول مدعي عام اقل شي عندو توقيف 14 يوم على ذمة التعقيم !	God damn this menacing virus, it is acting as the public prosecutor who detains people for 14 days on remand of sterilization!	
9.	انطمو فالدار مضاد لفيروس كورونا 30 حبة بصرف بوصفة وطنية ، 30 ملغ عدماستهنارون و 30 ملغ انتماء ووطنون و 30 ملغ احترامقانون	30 tablets of Staying at home Anti-Coronavirus, dispensed with a national prescription, 30 mg of carefulness, 30 mg of patriotism, and 30 mg of abiding by the law.	
10.	مشاهير زمن كورونا: الحيارى ، تامر ، صبحي، ممرضة البشير ، دكتور الرمثا ، عريس اربد، عريس الحظر، الخضرجي.	The Celebrities of Corona time: Al-Hiyari, Tamer, Subhi, nurse working at Al-Bashir , a doctor from Ramtha, the groom from Irbid, the groom who caused the ban, the greengrocer.	Allusion
11.	الجهات المصرح له بالتجول هي : القوات المسلحة ، الدفاع المدني،قوات الامن العام، الحيارى.	The authorized bodies to roam are: armed forces, civil defense, public security forces, Al-Hiyari.	
12.	لتجنب الاصابة بكورونا عليك بالاتي: تجنب الاماكن المزدحمة مثل الدوام، تجنب الاماكن للي مالها داعي مثل الدوام، تجنب الاماكن المغلقة مثل الدوام.	To avoid infection with Corona, you should do the following: Avoid crowded places such as work, avoid places that are not necessary, such as work, avoid closed places such as work.	Definition
13.	تعريف العولمة: واحد ياكل خفاش بالصين و يقطعك من الدخان في الرصيصة .	Definition of globalization: someone eats a bat in China, and cuts you off from cigarettes in Russeifa.	
14.	فايروس كورونا صار مثل المخدرات الي يصيدوا لازم يقولهم كل الاسماء يلي تعامل معهم.	Corona virus has become like drugs; if someone is infected with corona, all the names of those who dealt with the person must be told.	Exaggeration
15.	مطلوب كروز دخان اي نوع البدل دوام ارض بعبدون .	A bartering with an acre of land in Abdoun with a set of packs of cigarettes, any type, is offered.	
16.	اكتشاف عاجل لفيروس كورونا ! ثلاث ايام تشرب مي و عسل و حامض ، و رابع يوم تشرب مي و عسل، بيطلع الفيروس يسالك وين الحامض يتضربه على راسه بيموت.	An urgent discovery of the Coronavirus: You drink water, honey and lemonade for three days, and in the fourth day, you drink only water and honey, so the virus comes out to ask you about the lemonade, then you hit it on the head and it dies.	Absurdity
17.	اليوم فاتوا عالينك اثنين حاطين كمامات الناس خافت بس لما عرفت انهم حرامية ارتاحوا.	Today, two guys with masks walked in the bank, so the people were in fear, but when everybody knew they were thieves, they were relieved.	
18.	ابن النائمة الصيني لو عصر نص ليمونة على شوربة الخفاش شو كان خسر ضيعنا الله لا يوفقه.	If the stupid Chinese man squeezed half a lemon on the bat soup, what would he have lost? God may not reward him!	Disappointment
19.	كنت احب احضر فلم بيحكى عن نهاية العالم ، فيضانات و اوبئة و نهاية البشر ، ولا مره فكرت انو رح اشارك بالفلم شخصيا.	I used to love to attend films that talked about the end of the world, floods, plagues, and the end of mankind, but I never once thought that I was going to participate in the film personally.	
20.	كان لما واحد يعطس قدامنا واحد نقول له: يرحمك الله اليوم صاروا يقولوا له : الله لا يوفقه.	We used to say to someone who sneezes in front of us: God bless you, but today, they started saying to him: God may not reward you well.	
21.	عم فكر جيب ميزان ثاني رايبين احسن من راي .	I am thinking of buying another weight scale. Two heads are better than one.	Ignorance
22.	عم تعذبك مرتك ؟ رن على وزارة الصحة و بلغ انو عليها	If your wife tortures you, call the Ministry of Health and tell	

	حرارة و يمكن كورونا الحجز 14 يوم ، الله يقدرنا على فعل الخير.	them that she has a fever and you suspect that she is infected with corona; she will be detained for 14 days. May God reward us well.	
23.	المصاب بالانفلونزا العادية لا يصاب بكورونا المصدر : ابو محمود البليط قال لي مفيش فيروس بيرضى يخش على فيروس ثاني !	A person with regular influenza does not get corona. Source: Abu Mahmoud who works in tiling told me that viruses do not penetrate each other!	
24.	هلا اذا صار هزه ارضية و كورونا مع بعض بنطلع لبرا والا بنفوت لجوا ؟.. اللي بيجاوب صح بيتاهل معنا لمرحلة البركان .	If an earthquake and a corona occurred together, would we go out on land, or stay inside? Whoever gets the right answer will move on to the level of volcano.	
25.	واحد اخذ مرتو راح يحللها كورونا بعد يومين حاكوا و قالوله التقرير تبع مرتك تخربط مع تقرير ثاني لحالة زهايمر و نحننا هلا مو عارفين عندها كورونا و الا زهايمر قالهم طبيب انا شو المفروض اعمل ؟ قالوله: خدوها و روح فيها لمكان بعيد عن البيت واتركها و اذا عرفت ترجع البيت لحالها لا تقتلها .	Someone took his wife to do the PCR test, after two days the medical staff told him that the medical report of his wife and was mixed up with a second report on the case of Alzheimer's, and we did not know about the results whether it is Corona or Alzheimer, so he said to them: Ok, what am I supposed to do? They said to him: Take her and go with her to a place far from the house and leave her, and if she knows the way, she will return home, but do not open the door to her.	Rigidity

REFERENCES

- [1] Attardo, Salvador. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- [2] Banikalef, A., Maros, M., Aladdin, A. (2014). Linguistic analysis of humor in Jordanian Arabic among young Jordanians Facebookers. *Arab World English Journal*, 5(3), 304-318.
- [3] Berger, Arthur. (1993). *An anatomy of humor*. Transaction Publishers.
- [4] Billig, Michael. (2002). Freud and the language of humour. *The Psychologist*, 15(9), 452–455.
- [5] Chłopicki, W. & Brzozowska, D. (2021). Sophisticated humor against COVID-19: The Polish case. *Humor*, 34(2), 201-227. Retrieved March 12th, 2021, from <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2021-0015>.
- [6] El Khachab, C. (2017). Compressing scales: Characters and situations in Egyptian internet humor. *Middle East Critique*, 26, 331 - 353. Retrieved October 20th, 2021 from https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:1ef938a4-9ea6-4087-821f-e42b592b2c61/download_file?safe_filename=ElKhachab_CompressingScales_AAM.pdf&file_format=application%2Fpdf&type_of_work=Journal+article.
- [7] Heidari-Shahreza, M. A. (2017). A rhetorical analysis of humor styles and techniques used in Persian stand-up comedy. *Humor*, 30(4), 359-381. Retrieved May 11th, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2017-0025>.
- [8] Hussein, A., & Aljamili, L. (2020). COVID-19 humor in Jordanian social media: A socio-semiotic approach. *Heliyon*, 6(12), 1–12. Retrieved May 11th, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05696>.
- [9] Kuipers, Giseline. (2020). Humor in tijden van Corona [Humor in Times of Corona]. *Webinar Postuniversitair Centrum of the Catholic University of Leuven*. Retrieved February 12th, 2022, from <https://www.bnr.nl/podcast/thebigfive/10420455/humor-giseline-kuipers>
- [10] Latta, Robert. (1998). *The basic humor process*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- [11] Lutfi, Rizky. (2017). Rhetorical techniques on Reddit's racist jokes. *Language Horizon*, 5(2), 9-16.
- [12] Morreall, John. (1987). *The philosophy of laughter and humor*. State University of New York Press.
- [13] Mikhalkova E., Tretyakov P., Pupysheva 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. Retrieved June 26th, 2022, from <https://knepublishing.com/index.php/KnE-Social/article/view/6353>.
- [14] Olah, Andrew R. & Thomas E. Ford. (2021). Humor styles predict emotional and behavioral responses to COVID-19. *International Journal of Humor Research*, 34(2), pp. 177-199. Retrieved May 20th, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2021-0009>.
- [15] Raskin, Victor. (2007). *The sense of humor and the truth*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- [16] Rochmawati, Dyah. (2017). Pragmatic and rhetorical strategies in the English-written jokes. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(1), 149. Retrieved January 27th, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i1.6868>.
- [17] Ruch, Willibald. (1998). *The sense of humor*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- [18] Shifman, L. (2014). *Memes in digital culture*. MIT Press.
- [19] Strick, Madelijn. (2021). Funny and meaningful: Media messages that are humorous and moving provide optimal consolation in corona times. *International Journal of Humor Research*, 34(2), 155-176. Retrieved June 30th, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2021-0017>.
- [20] Sully, James. (1902). *An essay on laughter: The project Gutenberg E-Book of an essay on laughter*. Longmans, Green, and CO. Retrieved September 10th, 2021, from <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/58606/58606-h/58606-h.htm>.



Mahmoud Ali Al-Qudah holds a PhD in English and Civilization from Michigan State University (1986). He earned his Master's in Linguistics and English Teaching from Leeds University, United Kingdom, in 1984, after getting a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Yarmouk University, 1980. During his career, Prof. Qudah has served as vice president, dean, and chairperson, as well as acting as a consultant in higher education, and to the UN. His interest in international politics and world civilization has led him to get involved with various fields. Prof. Qudah is a member of the Jordanian alumni for graduates of US Universities, as well as of TESOL, MSU alumni, the Association of Professors of English and Translation at Arab Universities (APETAU).



Shereen Monther Abu Hait was born in Kuwait on October 9th, 1980. She is currently a PhD student at the University of Jordan. She received her BA degree in the English Language and Literature from Al Isra'a University in Amman, Jordan in 2001, and she gained her MA degree in the English Language and Literature from the Middle East University in Amman, Jordan in 2014.

Mrs. Shereen Abu Hait published an article about the Functions of Code Switching Used by Secondary Students in English Classes in 2014.