

# Hate Speech in Bumper Stickers in Jordan

Abdullah A. Jaradat

Department of English Language & Literature, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Zarqa, Jordan

Raid N. Al Hammouri

Department of English Language and Translation, Jadara University, Irbid, Jordan

Baker Bani-Khair

Department of English Language & Literature, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Zarqa, Jordan

Wael M. S. Zuraik

Department of English Language & Literature, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Zarqa, Jordan

Maisoun I. M. Abu-Joudeh

Department of English Language & Literature, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Zarqa, Jordan

Husam Al-Momani

Department of English Language & Literature, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Zarqa, Jordan

**Abstract**—This study investigates hate speech in bumper stickers in Jordan. A random corpus of 220 bumper stickers has been collected by the researchers themselves over the period of a year during which they have been commuting from their place of living to the Hashemite University. Graphics and images of any kind and shape are excluded. The findings show that 120 stickers out of 220 exhibit hate speech at the thematic level, and 50 stickers show structural hate speech since they restrictively use imperatives. Stickers displaying thematic hate speech are divided into five categories: stickers with direct threats to others' souls and properties; stickers with challenges to others; stickers displaying driver's disappointment, despair, and misery; stickers displaying indifference to others' feelings, ideas, and properties; and stickers with implicit hate speech. Finally, the findings show that although the targeted stickers show hate speech, they do not carry any indication of blasphemy or disloyalty, and they do not gear addressees towards vandalism.

**Index Terms**—bumper stickers, hate speech, thematic hate speech, structural hate speech

## I. INTRODUCTION

Bumper stickers have recently caught much attention from linguists, sociolinguists, educationalists, and behaviorists at the same time. Bumper stickers have become a new type of discourse through which drivers express their opinions, feelings, beliefs, and sums of their experiences in life. Sometimes, drivers may write mottos they take as their principle in life. By definition, bumper stickers are pithy statements written in a very large font size to be visible and readable by other drivers and pedestrians as well. Jaradat (2016) says that bumper stickers are characterized by the following features: brevity which is due to the lack of space available; the huge size of the font in order to be visible and readable, and simplicity in order to be read and understood by all readers.

Quite a large number of studies have tackled bumper stickers from various perspectives including Belk (1988), Stern and Solomon (1992), Bloch (2000), Norton-Meier (2004), Szlemko et al. (2008), Chilwa (2008), Nordlinger (2015), Burt and Simes (2015), and Haynsworth (2008), to mention a few.

Recently, the term 'hate speech' has appeared repeatedly in public media, in social media and in academic publications. A dictionary definition for the term is hard to find for two reasons. First, the term is a noun phrase that contains two nouns; each of which can be defined separately. Second, the term is more a legal term than a linguistic one. According to *Hate Speech Explained: A Toolkit* (2015), hate speech is defined as "any expression of discriminatory hate towards people." (p. 10). No study has so far explored hate speech in pithy expressions like proverbs, conventional sayings and bumper stickers.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is an investigation of hate speech in bumper stickers in Jordan. Specifically, it aims at arriving at the features, components, and sources of hate speech in bumpers stickers. As such, the present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the components and sources of hate speech in bumper stickers in Jordan?

## 2. What are the types of hate speech in bumper stickers in Jordan?

### III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Generally speaking, the study of bumper stickers is significant since it reveals very important aspects about a large group of people i.e. drivers as well as their societies and cultures. In other words, we can learn a lot about a certain group of people i.e. owners of vehicles with stickers, the society they live in, and their culture in general. Stickers should not be ignored since they reflect drivers' beliefs, needs, problems, orientations, opinions, feelings, and stories of life. Moreover, the study is significant since it is, at the level of Jordan, unprecedented; it is the first to study hate speech in bumper stickers. In addition, such a study helps us understand the views and the attitudes of a sub-group of the Jordanian community towards various personal, political, educational, and social issues. The study will supposedly help in identifying sources, features and components of hate speech in Jordan as reflected in bumper stickers.

### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature will be divided into two sections; the first explores studies that focus on bumper stickers in general, while the second focuses on hate speech in general and hate speech in bumper stickers and similar short expressions in specific.

#### A. *Bumper Stickers*

Kenyatti (2002) studies gender differences in graffiti written on Kenyan public minibuses. The results of the study reveal that stickers depict women as weak, cheap and sexually available. Allo (2006) has studied the stickers written or attached to vehicles in 1970s in Nigeria. He says that the themes of the stickers are majorly about anti-speeding. However, later on the stickers have become markers of social stratification i.e. newer cars could carry more prestigious statements than old vehicles. Allo argues that new themes, political, social and economic are now detected.

Chiluwa (2008) studies how vehicle stickers participate in constructing individual and group religious identities. The data of his study consists of 73 stickers. Chiluwa has found out that through stickers, drivers construct and publicize their individual and group identities. Moreover, the stickers are viewed as a means of group identification through which drivers can gain social security and some privileges. The idea of using stickers to express membership to a certain cultural community is also proposed by Bloch (2000) who has studied political bumper stickers in Israel applying an ethnographic approach. Bloch (2000) states that stickers in Israel have first appeared as a 'spontaneous protest medium' to certain political events and have been repeatedly used throughout the year. Bloch presents some of the merits of stickers including: minimal cost, time and effort; however, they offer wide exposure since they keep moving.

This phenomenon has been frequently studied by Arab scholars, a fact which reflects the wide spread of bumper stickers in Arab countries. Hazaymeh (2007) has conducted a sociolinguistic study of written expressions on vehicles in Jordan in order to determine the influence of social factors, such as gender, age, level of education and place of living on the use of bumper stickers. The data of the study consists of two groups. The first is 800 phrases the researcher herself has gathered from various governorates in Jordan. The second group consists of 400 phrases the researcher has gathered through a questionnaire.

Jaradat (2016) studies the content of bumper stickers in Jordan. The data of the study consists of 218 bumper stickers the researcher himself has collected over the period of one year. Jaradat reveals that "the purpose of most of stickers is fun and humor' and that 'most of them are not serious and do not carry biting messages." (p. 253). Jaradat has found that politics is a taboo in Jordan; it is not acceptable to discuss it in stickers of any kind, and that the stickers have not contained 'any criticism to the most dominant problems at level of society including racism, nepotism, anti-feminism, inflation, high-taxes and refugees"(p.253).

Barhoumah (2016) studies the phrases written on vehicle structures in Jordan. The data consists of 1000 phrases the researcher himself has collected. The researcher classifies the stickers into four macro-categories: traditional sayings which includes proverbs; religious phrases which may include verses from the Holy Quran and Hadith of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him); love and flirtation phrases; and phrases that are assumed to protect the vehicles from envy which, as said before, is believed to cause harm to the vehicle.

Al-Momani et al. (2017) have studied bumper stickers in Jordan from a structural perspective. The data consists of 227 stickers. Al-Momani et al. have found that 90 percent of the stickers are sentences in the present tense. They further explain that "the combination of the three elements i.e. sentence, declarative, and simple is what facilitates the job for the drivers to write their opinions" (p. 91). Al-Momani et al. further say that imperatives and interrogatives are quite common since stickers are addressed to other drivers.

Izz al-Din (2018) says that stickers in the past were mostly directive i.e. they direct drivers to avoid speeding and to drive carefully. However, nowadays, stickers have become less conservative and their topics have diversified. Moreover, the researcher observes that most stickers appear on old cars; a comment which is valid to most studies.

Darwish and Al Rousan (2019) have studied the content of car inscriptions in Jordan. They state that car inscriptions are one kind of graffiti. The data of the study consist of 322 items collected by the researchers themselves. The

researchers have found that stickers in Jordan could belong to one or another of the following categories: religion 36 %; philosophy 15%; advertisement 14 %; tagging 12%; futility and fun 6%; patriotism 5%; alliance 3%; brands 3%; romance 2%; instructions 2%; politics 1%; and greetings 1%.

### B. Hate Speech

*Hate Speech Explained: A toolkit* (2015) says "there is no universally accepted definition of it in international human rights law" (p.9). The same idea is stated by the Council of Europe website which says 'hate speech has no particular definition in international human rights; it is a term used to describe broad discourse that is extremely negative and constitutes a threat to social peace.' The lack of definition is due to the fact that the term is new and the fact the phenomenon is so wide and includes so many factors and perspectives that are not universally agreed upon to be as sources and causers of hate speech. *Hate Speech Explained: A toolkit* (2015) explains that much of the confusion about the term rises from the fact that "international and regional human rights instruments imply varying standards for defining and limiting hate speech" and that 'these variations are reflected in differences in domestic legislations" (p. 9).

The Council of Europe's website attempts to define hate speech saying that 'According to the Committee of Ministers, hate speech covers all forms of expressions that spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance.' In YouTube community guidelines, hate speech is defined as 'content that promotes violence or hatred against individuals or groups based on certain attributes, such as: race, or ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender, age, veteran status or sexual orientation/ gender identity.'

## V. METHODS

One notice that should be said before going to data collection and analysis is that the researchers intentionally use the singular male pronoun 'he' to refer to the drivers who attach bumper stickers to their vehicles since drivers or owners of cars with bumper stickers are unanimously men; the number of women owning cars with stickers is very limited, and they are hard to find. Generally speaking, women do not like to smear their cars with stickers, no matter how beautiful or expressive the stickers are; they like to keep their cars clean and beautiful. Moreover, stickers, particularly those under study, will give readers the implication that drivers are aggressive and offensive, and females do not like to give such an impression.

### A. Data Collection

The data for the study have been collected by the researchers themselves over a period of a year during which they have been on the road- parking, driving, and walking- looking for vehicles with bumper stickers or any statement written on rear bumpers, trunks, or rear windshields. The researchers have been helped by friends and students. A total number of 220 stickers have been collected. The researchers and the aides have used their cell phones to take images of the stickers on the vehicles. The supporting team has used WhatsApp application to send the images to the researchers who have collected all the images in one file. Another method the researchers as well as the supporting team have followed is notetaking and memorizing. The supporting team members have been asked to write down the stickers they see if they are not able to photograph the cars. The least authentic way is memorizing the stickers since the researchers tend to forget the stickers if they have not documented them. However, the researchers have not divided the stickers into groups according to the means of collection since all the means serve the same purpose i.e. to provide a sufficient corpus for the study.

### B. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis has been applied to classify stickers into two groups: stickers containing hate speech and stickers lacking hate speech. The stickers with hate speech have been further divided into smaller categories according to the sources of hate speech whether it is structural or lexical or both. The stickers with lexical hate speech are further divided into five categories according to their topics.

## VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the various sources of hate speech in bumper stickers in Jordan. It also provides the exact numbers and percentages of each group. As mentioned before, the exact number of the stickers is 220. All types of images for people or for symbols such as the crown, which indicates loyalty to the ruling regime in Jordan, the pirate flag or the scorpion have been ignored for two reasons. First: there is no room in the study to provide images; the focus of the study is verbal bumper stickers. Second: images have been ignored to protect the privacy of the drivers. Moreover, it has not occurred to the researcher that symbols could exhibit hate speech in a way that is more powerful and more visible than sentences and phrases.

Prior to talking about the micro-groups, some remarks that apply to most if not all stickers should be given. First, the stickers are voluntarily exhibited; the drivers have not been asked nor urged or forced by another party to exhibit such inscriptions. In other words, such stickers exhibit voluntary hate speech. The drivers have volunteered willingly to exhibit the negativity, the animosity, the antagonism, and the grudge they have towards others and the community through bumper stickers.

Second, the hate speech in some of the stickers is implicit. For example, when the driver writes the phrase ‘the powerful/ big one has arrived’, he implicitly describes the addressee, the reader or the other driver as smaller or weaker. In the same manners, when the driver writes the phrase ‘the eagle has arrived’, he implicitly means that the others are ‘weak, helpless birds.’

Third, not a single bumper sticker contains any marker or indication of blasphemy, which is considered the extremist exemplar of hate speech. This is largely due to the fact that the Jordanian society is a conservative one which does not bear any sign of blasphemy. The driver cannot account on his rage to protect him from others’ rage in case he has attached some blasphemy stickers.

Finally, hate speech witnessed in the stickers is individual i.e. the driver against the others. The stickers do not exhibit any clues of discrimination against a certain individual or a specific group of people on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, or color. The stickers do not target a particular addressee or subject. The stickers are simply viewed as containing hate speech since they contain aggressive language.

Hate speech in the stickers could be divided into two macro-groups: thematic and structural. Out of the 220 stickers forming the corpus of the study, 120 stickers exhibit thematic hate speech constituting 54.5 percent of the total number, whereas the number of the stickers in the second macro-group is 50 forming about 23 percent. Needless to say that the two groups may overlap. In other words, some structural stickers may also have a hate speech content. The two macro-functions will be explained in the following two sections. Table 1 below presents the types, the frequencies, and the percentages of hate speech in bumper stickers in Jordan

TABLE 1  
TYPES, FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGES OF HATE SPEECH IN BUMPER STICKERS IN JORDAN

|                               | Types of Thematic Hate Speech      | Frequency | % out of stickers with hate speech (120) | % out of total Num. (220) |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Thematic Hate Speech</b>   | Stickers with threats to others    | 21        | 17.5                                     | 9.5                       |
|                               | Stickers with challenges to others | 7         | 6  | 3                         |
|                               | Stickers exhibiting disappointment | 47        | 39                                       | 21                        |
|                               | Stickers exhibiting indifference   | 20        | 16.5                                     | 9                         |
|                               | Implicit hate speech               | 21        | 17.5                                     | 9.5                       |
| <b>Structural Hate Speech</b> |                                    | 50        |  | 22.5                      |

#### A. Thematic Hate Speech

As mentioned before, this group of stickers involves stickers that have a hate speech content. The number of the stickers in this group is 120 forming 54.5 % of the total number. However, these stickers can be divided into five micro-groups according to their themes. These micro-groups are listed below.

1. Stickers containing direct threats to others’ souls or properties
2. Stickers containing challenges to others
3. Stickers containing the driver’s disappointment, despair and misery
4. Stickers containing the driver’s indifference towards others’ feelings, beliefs, and properties
5. Stickers containing implicit or indirect hate speech.

##### (a.) Type1: Stickers Containing Direct Threats to Others’ Souls and Properties

These stickers contain direct threats to others; hence the existence of expressions such as kill, death, scorpion, and hit. The number of the stickers in this group is 21 constituting 9.5 % of total number of stickers and 17.5 % of the number of stickers with thematic hate speech. Consider the following examples:

1. By Allah, I’ll make him a lesson (for others)
2. I can hit everybody, but mom told me not to do so.
3. (written on a small car) When I grow up, I’ll show you.
4. The driver is inflammable
5. If your father taught you how to raise your nose high, I was taught how to break it.

In (1), the driver is swearing by Allah that he would teach the targeted anonymous addressee a lesson. The driver is threatening the anonymous targeted person to do him bad deeds that nobody would forget. In (2), the driver is bragging that he has the ability to hit anybody, but he declines to do so because of his mother who has told him not to do so. Although the sticker is perceived by some as humorous, it shows negative language due to the existence of word hit. The sticker in (3) is a personification since the car itself is threatening other cars as well as the drivers that it will teach them a lesson when it grows up or when it becomes bigger. The sticker has a humorous aspect; however, it is viewed by the researchers as expressing hate speech since it contains a threat.

The driver in (4) is warning other drivers that he is inflammable i.e. can lose his temper easily and that his anger is devastating. The driver is warning other drivers to be cautious when dealing with him. In (5), the driver is threatening other drivers that he is reared on breaking noses so other drivers should not think of raising their noses i.e. do not be proud of yourself and family even if you are accustomed to do so. Other stickers in this group are:

6. A tank project
7. The scorpion

*(b). Type 2: Stickers Containing Challenges to Other Drivers*

This group of stickers includes seven stickers only. They make up 3 percent of the total number of stickers and almost 6 percent of the number of stickers with hate speech. In these stickers, the driver presents challenges to other drivers since he is uncomfortable with their presence on the road. The driver is challenging other drivers to outspeed or overtake his car. Some stickers ask other drivers to come in front of or behind the vehicle that exhibits the sticker. Consider the following examples

8. Outspeed it and take it!
9. Do not overtake my car; you're not equal to me!
10. When driving slowly, do not think I'm not skillful; challenge me and you'll see!
11. If you're clever, come from behind (on a sewage tank)!
12. If you're clever, come from the front (on a road roller)!

In (8), the driver challenges other drivers to outspeed his car, and he offers them his car if they can outspeed it. In other words, the driver is sure that they cannot outspeed his car; a fact that explains why he has offered his as a reward. In (9), the driver warns other drivers not to try to overtake his car since they are not equal to him, or they do not have the skills he has. The sticker in (10) warns other drivers not to assume that he lacks the skill to drive fast, and he urges them to race him to see how skillful he is.

The driver attaching the sticker in (11) is challenging other drivers to come from behind or to keep driving from behind since he is driving a sewage tank. Nobody likes to drive behind a sewage tank; it smells bad, and it looks bad. Of course, this sticker is humorous; however, it contains a negative attitude towards others. In the last sticker, the driver is challenging other drivers to drive in front of his vehicle since he is driving a road roller.

*(c). Type 3: Sticker Exhibiting Driver's Disappointment, Despair and Misery*

This group of stickers is the largest group; it includes 47 stickers forming more than 21 percent of the total number of stickers and more than 39 percent of number of stickers with hate speech. Some may ask why this type of stickers has been considered as examples of hate speech. A reasonable explanation is that stickers are voluntarily exhibited by the drivers without being asked or requested to do so. By doing so, drivers transmit deliberately or undeliberately their negative ideas and attitudes to others. Moreover, by doing so they intrude or transgress on others' privacy. In addition, by writing negative statements that show disappointment, despair, and misery, drivers help spreading negative ideas and values which could be infectious thus enhancing readers' depression, disappointment, misery and despair and may encourage others to commit misdemeanors, such as crimes and committing suicide in the extreme form.

Following are some examples of the stickers in this type.

13. The sea is salty and people run after benefits.
14. I loved travelling because of people's treachery.
15. There's no hope.
16. Forget about such life.
17. When I finished building the ship, the sea has become dry.
18. The sea has never been worried about the ship.
19. Mother taught me love and kindness; life taught me not to trust anybody.

As evident in all the stickers above, the writer/driver is disappointed, miserable, and hopeless because the majority of people's deeds and views are characterized with treachery, dishonesty, exploitation, nepotism, and materialism.

The sticker in (13) has two parts joined to each other with the conjunction 'and' which is usually used to join two equal elements. The first part expresses a universal fact that the sea is salty. The second part is joined to first part to indicate that it is also a fact: that people are exploiters i.e. they are geared by their benefits. In (14), the driver- mostly of a lorry- expresses his mistrust of people. He states that he has loved travelling because of people's treachery and nepotism. Stickers (15) and (16), show clearly the driver's mistrust of people that he has got fed up with such a life and that he has lost all hope in achieving peace of mind.

Obviously, some of these stickers are not realistic as in (17) above; the driver has never been involved in building a ship, but this common saying is also widespread among people to indicate one's utmost misery and hopelessness. In (18), the sea has been personified and represented as a stone-hearted person who has never been worried about ships. Besides disappointment, misery, and hopelessness, the sticker indicates pessimism as well. The sticker may also be interpreted as a metaphor. In the same manner as the sea which is not worried about ships so is the driver who is not worried about other drivers. The driver's mistrust or lack of trust in anybody is obvious in sticker (19), in which the driver expresses his gratitude and appreciation for his mother who has taught him love and kindness and disparagement of life which has taught him to mistrust any person.

*(d). Type 4: The Driver's Indifference Towards Others' Feelings, Privacy, and Freedom*

This group includes those stickers that exhibit the driver's indifference towards others' feelings, privacy, freedom and properties, their vehicles to be specific. Moving with the belief that he is free to behave in the way he likes, and that the road is his own property, the driver attaches stickers to express these ideas. The total number of these stickers is 20 which makes up to 9 percent of the total number of stickers and 16.6 of the number of stickers with hate speech. Following are some of the stickers attached.

20. The Mercedes talks while the others are in pain.
21. You can drive either faster or slower; I drive the way I like.
22. By Allah, we'll start our honks.
23. If you're not happy, pluck your eyebrows.
24. Oh mountain, the wind will not affect you.

In (20), the driver is proud that he has a Mercedes car which is not only respected and powerful, but also expensive. The driver assumes that the others are in pain since they do not have a Mercedes car. Clearly, the driver does not care for others whether they have a Mercedes car or not. The driver in (21) is unashamedly telling the other drivers that he drives his car the way he likes; they can drive their cars faster or slower; he simply does not care. Driving a car faster than is required by traffic regulations may cause harm to other drivers, while driving slower may hinder others from reaching their destinations on time and in good mood. Speaking blatantly of his intentions of driving the way he likes is one manifestation of hate speech since he is not following regulations or respecting others' privacy.

In (22), the driver does not care for others' feelings; he insists that he will honk his horn regardless whether other people like it or not. Moreover, his insistence is strengthened by swearing by Allah; a swear that is considered the most sacred among Muslims. In (23), the driver is telling others whether they are drivers or pedestrians that if they do not like what he is doing, they can pluck their eyebrows. This statement is very common in daily life and is used by speakers who do not care for others' opinions of what they are doing. Of course there is not logical connection between liking what the driver is doing and plucking one's eyebrows. Eyebrows is simply used since it rhymes with 'you like' in Jordanian Arabic. Finally, in (24), the driver considers himself a mountain which is not affected by the strongest wind at all. In the same manner, the driver says that he will not be affected by others' opinions, attitudes, or deeds.

*(e). Type 5: Stickers not Addressed to Others; They Have Negative Themes*

The stickers in this group are less offensive, less negative and less hateful than the stickers in the previous groups. Some of them cannot be interpreted as negative at all at the explicit level; however, they are negative at the implicit level. The number of the stickers in this group is 21 which makes up to 9.5% of total number of stickers and 17.5% of the number of stickers with hate speech. Consider the following examples

25. Oh Allah, give me twice what they wish for me.
26. Blood bank (gasoline tank)
27. A family without a bad guy will lose its rights.
28. The fire of separation is killing.

In (25), the driver is praying to Allah to give the others whether they are friends or foes twice what they wish for him. The driver through this sticker warns others to wish him good things in order to receive twice the good things they have wished him. No need to say that bad wishers will receive twice what they have wished him. The driver in (26) refers to the gasoline tank as the blood bank since it consumes much of his money to keep the car running properly on the road. The driver is simply saying that when he fills the car with gas; he feels as if he is putting his blood in the tank, and when the car consumes the gas, he feels he is losing his blood. The sticker is negative since it contains the word blood.

In (27), the driver expresses his personal belief that a family which does not contain a malefactor will lose its rights completely. This belief is against the community's values that malefactors are unfavorable in society. The sticker in (28) is full of negative expressions like fire, separation and killing. Although the sticker describes the state of a loving man towards his beloved, it is, however, loaded with negative expressions with negative meanings.

*B. Structural Hate Speech*

This group includes 50 stickers that are imperative in structure. This number makes up 22.7 % of the total number of stickers. It is well-known that imperatives are very common between friends and between superiors and inferiors. However, drivers on the road are neither of these; they are not friends nor superiors. Drivers on the road are equal; they are users of the same road and have the same rights. Moreover, drivers on the road are strangers, and it is unacceptable and even offensive to use imperatives with strangers, be they drivers or pedestrians. Stickers with imperatives are considered examples of hate speech since they are patriarchal; they show drivers with stickers are higher in status and more powerful.

Following are examples of stickers with imperatives followed with some comments.

29. Make room for the big
30. Avoid me, (it is) better for you
31. Be watchful, the driver is an inflammable Jordanian.
32. Don't argue with the falcon, oh pigeon.
33. Keep mentioning Allah

In (29), the driver is commanding others drivers to make room for him and his car since the car is one of the biggest; it is either a truck or an SUV. The sticker contains an implicit message that the others are small in comparison to him. In (30), the driver is warning other drivers that it is better for them to avoid talking, arguing, challenging or dealing with him in general. The sticker contains an unsaid message that other drivers will receive fatal consequences if they have not avoided him. The sticker in (31) also contains a warning that drivers and pedestrians as well should avoid dealing with the driver since he is inflammable like other Jordanians.

In (32), the driver is again warning other drivers whom he describes as pigeons to avoid dealing with him with intransigence or stubbornness since he is a falcon, and pigeons can only hide when falcons hover around.

Unlike all the other examples of imperative stickers, sticker (33) is inoffensive at all; the driver is requesting other drivers to keep mentioning Allah all the time. However, the sticker has a hidden message which says ‘when you see my car, mention Allah;’ all this in order to avoid envy which according to religious and social beliefs may cause harm to the car. Whether the driver’s intent is the first meaning or the second meaning, the sticker remains an imperative that is uncommon among strangers. Nevertheless, the sticker is more acceptable among people since it religious.

One cannot conclude this section without providing general account for this widespread phenomenon. The abundance of the stickers that express the drivers’ misery, disappointment, and despair is due to the miserable social, economic, and political conditions people live in and going through nowadays. The owners of the cars with stickers, generally speaking, receive low incomes which do not enable them to live humbly and honorably. They barely manage- and some of them suffer- to provide their families with basic needs. Most of their cars are bought via loans taken from the banks. The difficult economic conditions make it difficult for them to live humbly and respectfully at the social level. The difficult economic situations enhance the feeling of animosity towards others, not to mention the corruption that penetrates every aspect of their lives pushing them to believe that they suffer from injustice and nepotism. Furthermore, at the political level, Jordanians live in a region full of political crises. It is full of conflicts: Palestine to the west; Syria to the north; and Iraq to the east. Let alone, the individual problems the drivers have in their families, neighborhoods, and occupations. All these conditions make people’s lives more complex, more tense, and less smooth.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of this study is to explore hate speech in bumper stickers in Jordan. The analysis of 220 bumper stickers collected reveals that 54 % of total number of stickers exhibit hate speech at the thematic level and 22% of the total number exhibit hate speech at the structural level since they include imperatives targeting strangers. Stickers with thematic hate speech can be divided into five micro-categories: stickers with direct threats to others’ souls and properties; stickers with challenges to others; stickers expressing the driver’s disappointment and despair; stickers expressing the driver’s indifference towards others’ feelings; and stickers with implicit hate speech.

One cannot exit the study without saying that most of the stickers cannot be interpreted literally; most of them have an affective function rather than a referential one. The supreme purpose of the stickers is fun and humor although they may look as having a serious content. The researchers assume that most of the drivers have attached these stickers because they like them either because they are funny or because they are poetic or because they rhyme. The purpose of attaching a sticker can only be investigated through a sociolinguistic study through which the drivers may be interviewed in order to arrive at the real purpose or motive for attaching such stickers.

A similar study may be conducted by other researchers to investigate symbols attached to rear windshields and bumpers. Furthermore, a study of gender variation in the use of car stickers might reveal more insights about concerns, interests, attitudes and ways of thinking of both men and women in Jordan. A Sociolinguistic study can be conducted to investigate the influence of a variety of social factors such as gender, age, level of education, place of accommodation, and job on the distribution and the kinds of bumper stickers attached.

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**Abdallah Jaradat** graduated from linguistics department at the University of Kansas in 2007 and he is now an associate professor of English at The Hashemite University, Jordan.

He has been teaching English semantics and pragmatics. His current job is at The Hashemite University. And he chaired the Dept. of English Language and Literature, and also directed The Language Center at HU. He has published 8 works on diverse Linguistics issues such as discourse analysis, proverbs, and sociolinguistic topics. His current and previous research interests are English writing, English proverbs, and second language learning. [abdjaradat@hu.edu.jo](mailto:abdjaradat@hu.edu.jo)

**Raid N. Al Hammouri** was born in Irbid, Jordan in 1969. He received a BA degree (English Language and Literature) at Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan in 1992. He obtained both his MA degree (Theoretical and Applied Linguistics) in 2001 and his Ph.D. degree (Literature and Criticism) from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Philosophy, Greece in 2007.

He has been teaching English Language and Literature since 2009 at Irbid National University and at Jadara University, Irbid, Jordan.

He is currently an Assistant Professor at the Department of the English Language and Translation, Jadara University, Irbid, Jordan. His research interest is in literature, criticism, and theoretical and applied linguistics. [rhammouri@jadara.edu.jo](mailto:rhammouri@jadara.edu.jo)

**Baker Bani-Khair** is currently an associate professor of English Literature at The Hashemite University, Jordan. He has published several articles on different aspects that mainly deal with Gothic Literature, cultural studies and Film. His Film research interests are varied and multifarious, but he especially focuses on the 1950s and 1960s American films and history. [baker1983@hu.edu.jo](mailto:baker1983@hu.edu.jo)



**Wael M. Zuraiq** is an associate professor of English at The Hashemite University, Jordan- from 2005 till now. Dr. Zuraiq graduated from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA, in 2005 with a PHD in Linguistics.

He has been teaching English Linguistics, translation, and language skills in both BA and MA programs. His current job is at The Hashemite University. And he chaired the Dept. of English Language and Literature, and also directed The Language Center at HU. He has published 25 works on varied Linguistics topics such as learning lexical stress by second language learners of English, phonological assimilation issues, and dialectology. His current and previous research interests are English phonetics, English phonology, and second language acquisition.

Prof. Zuraiq is a member in Jordanian Professors of English. He was a member of national committee of English exam for admission postgraduate students, Ministry of Higher education, Jordan. [zuraiq@hu.edu.jo](mailto:zuraiq@hu.edu.jo)



**Maisoun Abu-Joudeh** holds a Ph. D in linguistics from the University of Kansas, USA. She is currently an associate professor in the department of English Language and literature at the Hashemite University, Jordan. Her current research interests lie in foreign language learning and teaching. [maisoun@hu.edu.jo](mailto:maisoun@hu.edu.jo)





**Husam S. Al-Momani** holds a Ph.D. in Rhetoric & Linguistics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A. He is currently an associate professor in the department of English Language and Literature at the Hashemite University, Jordan. His current research interests are pragmatics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis. HusamS@hu.edu.jo