Humour in Jordanian Arabic and British English: A Socio-Pragmatic Perspective

By

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ABSTRACT

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This study focuses on the importance of examining the differences of humour in both Jordanian Arabic and British English jokes. The core of the theory employed for this purpose is an eclectic one, making use of Attardo and Raskin’s (1991) General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) plus the Knowledge Resources (KRs) defined as those linguistic elements that inform the joke. Hence, this study presents a classification of the general linguistic, situation and character categories that are applicable to the sources of jokes, all based on bending or breaking (violation) of natural, social moral, ethical, or logical rules and patterns of behaviour.

Following the specification of the model of analysis, the study aims at discussing and analyzing different types of jokes concentrating on linguistic, pragmatic and cultural difficulties that the researcher might face while analysing them.
The data in this study were collected randomly from people of all walks of life and from magazines, newspapers, the internet and TV shows.

To achieve the purpose of this study, 43 Jordanian Arabic and British English jokes were discussed and analysed. These 43 jokes will cover different fields such as: religious, political, sexual, kinship, stupidity, culture, and shrewdness issues. The first five were developed by Shunnaq (1996). The last two were developed by the researcher. Though the data of each kind were analysed separately, the procedures followed were identical.

The results of the study reveal that differences between Jordanian and British jokes are due to culture specific, linguistic and pragmatic ambiguity. Similarities among jokes reveal the universal jokes which are the easiest to explain and understand.

The present study falls into five chapters. Chapter One presents an introduction in which the statement of the problem, its purpose, methods and limitations are stated. Chapters Two and Three offer an extensive theoretical survey of the various approaches to the study of the phenomena of humour and jokes, their types, functions, pragmatic aspects and relationship to linguistic means of expression. Chapter Four presents data selection and analysis. Finally, Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations for further researches.