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Egyptian Humor in January 25 Revolution: A Linguistic Study

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نُّشَاءٍ

وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

صدق الله العظيم

(سورة يوسف-الآية ٧٦)

To the soul of my late mother,

To my father,

To my grandmother,

To my brothers and sisters,

Thank you

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Abstract

This study presents a linguistic analysis of fifty-one humorous texts created during January 25 revolution. These texts include verbal and referential forms as well as linguistically-based visual humor; they comprise chants, jokes, slogans, banners, placards, and caricatures. The aim of this study is threefold: to investigate the relationship between humorous texts and the revolution and to uncover the features of these revolutionary humorous texts, to examine and highlight the functions achieved by these texts, and to assess the explanatory power of the Cooperative Principle (CP) and the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) to account for Arabic humorous texts produced during the uprising. It demonstrated the multi-layered aspects of these texts and the need for a model reader to appreciate these culturally-based and linguistically-related texts; it also demonstrated the multi-functionality of the employed humor in exposing Mubarak's maladministration and calling for his departure; and it asserted the explanatory power of the two linguistic tools in highlighting the various features, dimensions and implications of the deployed humorous texts. Finally, this study underscored two significant points for further research.

Keywords: Humor, January 25 Revolution, GTVH, CP, Arabic humor.

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List of Abbreviations

SSTH:	Semantic Script Theory of Humor
GTVH:	General Theory of Verbal Humor
KRs:	Knowledge Resources
SO:	Script Opposition
LM:	Logical Mechanism
TA:	Target
NS:	Narrative Strategy
SI:	Situation
LA:	Language
IDM:	Isotopy-Disjunction Model
CP:	Cooperative Principle
BS:	Background Scripts
FS:	Foreground Scripts

Phonemic Symbols

The following list of phonemic symbols used in transcribing the titles of the Arabic books as well as some other terms used by the researcher. It is based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Consonants:

1- Plosive sounds:

Arabic Consonant	Description	Symbol
ب	Voiced bilabial plosive	/b/
د	Voiced alveolar plosive	/d/
ت	Voiced alveolar plosive	/t/
ض	Voiced velarized alveolar plosive	/dʷ/
ط	Voiceless velarized alveolar plosive	/t̤/
ج	Voiced velar plosive	/g/
ك	Voiceless velar plosive	/k/
ق	Voiceless uvular plosive	/q/
ء	Voiceless glottal plosive	/ʔ/

2- Fricative sounds:

Arabic Consonants	Description	Symbol
ف	Voiceless labio-dental fricative	/f/
ذ	Voiced dental fricative	/ð/
ث	Voiceless dental fricative	/θ/
ز	Voiced alveolar fricative	/z/
س	Voiceless alveolar fricative	/s/
ظ	Voiced velarized alveolar fricative	/d̤/
ص	Voiceless velarized alveolar fricative	/s̤/
ش	Voiceless alveolo-palatal fricative	/ʃ/
غ	Voiced uvular fricative	/ʁ/
خ	Voiceless uvular fricative	/x/

ه	Voiced glottal fricative	/h/
ع	Voiced pharyngeal fricative	/ʕ/
ح	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative	/ħ/

3- Continuant and lateral sounds:

Arabic Consonants	Description	Symbol
ر	Voiced alveolar continuant	/r/
ل	Voiced alveolar lateral	/l/

4- Nasal sounds:

Arabic Consonants	Description	Symbol
م	Voiced bilabial nasal	/m/
ن	Voiced alveolar nasal	/n/

For geminated consonants, the sound symbol was repeated (e.g. /mm/)

5- Semi-Vowels:

Arabic Consonant	Description	Symbol
و	Voiced bilabial glide	/w/
ي	Voiced palatal glide	/j/

Vowels:

1- Simple vowels:

Symbol	Description	Example	Meaning
/ɪ/	Front short close vowel	/xa:lɪq/	creator
/æ/	Front short open vowel	/ba:ʕæ/	sold

/o/	Back short close vowel	/moħa:rib/	warrior
/i:/	Front long close vowel	/tilmi:z/	student
/a:/	Front long open vowel	/ħa:d/	sharp
/u:/	Back long close vowel	/ʈoru:d/	parcels

2- Diphthongs:

Symbol	Description	Example	Meaning
/ao/	Back close vowel	/zaʊgæh/	wife
/aɪ/	Front close vowel	/ainæmæ/	wherever
/ei/	Front mid vowel	/Zeinæb/	Zainab (name)