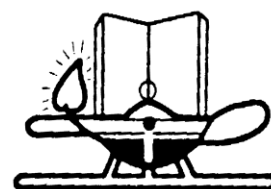




Ain Shams University
Faculty of Arts
Department of English Language and Literature



Faculty of Arts

Analysis of Selected Iraqi Ethnic Jokes Targeting Kurds and an Investigation of Iraqis' Attitudes towards Them

M.A. Thesis

Submitted to The Department of English Language and Literature

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By

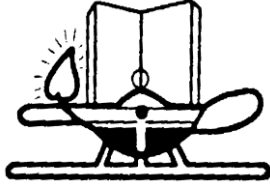
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جامعة عين شمس

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قسم اللغة الانجليزية وادابها

تحليل مختارات من النكات العرقية في العراق والتي تستهدف الأكراد

وإستقراء مواقف العراقيين تجاهها

رسالة ماجستير مقدمة من الطالبة

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مقدمة لقسم اللغة الانجليزية وادابها بجامعة عين شمس متطلب جزئي لنيل درجة الماجستير في اللغويات

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DEDICATION

TO

MY MOTHER & FATHER

Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze Iraqi jokes targeting Kurds with the aim of identifying the nature of ethnic jokes. To do so, the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) by Attardo and Raskin (1991) is applied to Iraqi jokes targeting Kurds. Furthermore, the study also investigates the attitudes of Iraqis towards these jokes before and after Kurdistan independence referendum. Twenty-seven jokes which are collected from six websites are analyzed in this study. The tools that are used in the analysis are the six parameters of GTVH and the cooperative principle (CP) (Grice,1975). Moreover, two online surveys were launched on a Facebook page to investigate Iraqis attitudes towards ethnic jokes. The result shows that there are different types of ethnic jokes that target Kurds in Iraq; jokes which target the language errors of Kurds while speaking the Iraqi dialect, jokes which accuses Kurds of being simple-minded, jokes which uses overt expressions, and other jokes which are published as Kurds-targeting jokes but they are not. The result also shows that there is a possible connection between jokes that uses overt expressions and violating the quality maxim alone.

Key Words: Iraqi ethnic jokes, General Theory of Verbal Humor, Cooperative Principle, Jokes targeting Kurds, Humor, Kurdistan of Iraq

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List of Abbreviations

GTVH:	General Theory of Verbal Humor
KRs:	Knowledge Resources
CP:	Cooperative Principle
IDM:	Isotopy Disjunction Model
LA:	Language jokes
SM:	Simple-mindedness jokes
OV:	Overt jokes
O:	Other
KU:	Kurdish
AR:	Arabic
IPA:	International Phonetic Alphabet
CSOI:	Central Statistical Organization in Iraq
KDP:	Kurdistan Democratic Party

Phonetic Symbols

The following is a list of transcription symbols which were used to transcribe Arabic texts in this study:

<i>Arabic letters and IPA symbols</i>												
IPA	/a:/	/b/	/t/	/θ/	/dʒ/	/ħ /	/x/	/d/	/ð/	/r/	/z/	/s/
AR	ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س
IPA	/ʃ/	/ʂ/	/dʔ/	/t̪/	/d̪/	/ʕ/	/ɣ/	/f/	/q/	/k/	/l/	/m/
AR	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق	ك	ل	م
IPA	/n/	/h/	/w/	/j/	/e/	/i/	/u/	Repetition	Long vowel	/in/	/en/	/un/
AR	ن	هـ	و	ي	َ	ِ	ُ	ّ	:	ِ	َ	ُ

The above table is adapted from: “Sorani Kurdish: A reference grammar with selected readings” by (Thackston, n.d., pp. 1-4)

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the objectives of the study and the research questions that the researcher attempts to answer in this thesis and the significance of the study. Then, the delimitation of the study and the Chapterization of the study is presented. This is followed by the background of the study and a discussion of ethnic groups in Iraq and the jokes which target some of these groups. The final section of this chapter presents definitions of terms which is used in the next chapter.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

Humor is not a new field and scientists from different fields such as psychology, anthropology, and sociology have studied humor, but only a few tackled it from a linguistic perspective. Thus, this study tackles humor from a linguistics perspective using the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) (Attardo and Raskin, 1991) to analyze the jokes. Moreover, studying jokes from a linguistic perspective is not the only aspect that needs to be studied further. Arabic jokes and humor in all their types need to be investigated. Studies conducted on jokes in the Arabic language are limited, and thus this study aims to contribute to filling this gap by investigating Iraqi Arabic jokes.

Iraq has all types of jokes but, ethnic jokes are the most interesting among them because of the contradictory views regarding this type. Both psychologists and sociologists have different views considering the healthiness of ethnic humor. Davies (1990) argues that ethnic jokes do not have any effect on society. He defends ethnic jokes saying that hatred cannot be funny, so, if the joke induces laughter then it is harmless. Oshima (2000) defends ethnic jokes, as well, saying that they are a healthy phenomenon and can reduce the tension between different ethnic groups and help them coexist.

In Iraq, ethnic jokes target other provinces and clans. Jokes which target Adduleim and inhabitants of Mosel are an example of these jokes. There are studies that examine Kurds as