Gender Identities in Jordanian Jokes

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at investigating the projections of gendered identities in Arabic Jordanian jokes. The data of this study consists of jokes that were selected from an online source for Arabic jokes based on the gender of the subject in the joke and the linguistic variety used. All the jokes have been analyzed in light of the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) that has been used as a theoretical framework to illustrate the ground-breaking characteristics of these new jokes and to contrast them with the traditionally gendered ones. The analysis of online Jordanian Arab jokes has revealed a patriarchal, often misogynistic perspective in jokes with rural lifestyle – which is usually known as the target of jokes in Jordan. On the other hand, modern jokes posted on the website Arabjokes.net that were analyzed in this study, give evidence of new tendencies – especially feminine in the humorous doing of gender, i.e. gender identities in Jordanian jokes. The analysis also validates the use of GTVH which is developed as a linguistic tool to capture joke (dis)similarity.

Keywords: Gender Linguistics; General Theory of Verbal Humour; Jordanian Arab Society.

1. Introduction

The field of research on humour has developed progressively over the past few decades, yet this area is still considered young, especially in the context of studies conducted in the Arab world (Aladdin, A. et al. 2014 & Alnamir. 2019). From a pragmalinguistic perspective, a joke is seen as a social phenomenon that includes both the creation and the appreciation of people, as they laugh and joke much more when they are with each other than when they are alone (Martin & Kuiper, 1999; Provine & Fisher, 1989).

In an attempt to explain how people perceive jokes, there is a very important question that falls under the scrutiny of g*ender linguistics which* is concerned with the idea of how men and women are treated differently by language. In this context, the language of joking is seen as a potential site for the construction of gendered identities. This topic was neglected for a long time in research. However, in the past few years, there has been an increasing interest in the contribution of the language of humour and joking (cf. the overview by Kotthoff 2006) and jokes (cf. Crawford 2003) to the performance of gender roles and identities in their relative social and cultural contexts. Such attempts have been mainly conducted and analyzed on material coming from Western speech communities.

Dunbar (2001) and Howrigan et al. (2008) say humour is a social phenomenon that happens in a natural setting spontaneously and should be studied extensively. Thus, this paper attempts to shed some light on the phenomenon of construction of gendered identities in Arab jokes since it has been under-represented in Arabic studies More specifically, it is the main goal of this study is to examine how feminine and masculine gendered identities are represented in Arabic-Jordanian jokes.

Traditionally, women have been excluded as joke-tellers, and have often been considered as the punch line of jokes (Goodman, 1992: 286). Freud (1905) suggested that men are repressing their emotions through humor, and tried to explain why women do not need a sense of humor by claiming they do not have as strong emotions to bury as men do. Grotjahn (1957) went further and made the claim that joke-telling is considered an aggressive act, which is why women

don't do it. However, these views are changing and the bank of jokes collected in this paper often place women as the joke-tellers and the protagonists who set up men for the punch line. Marlowe (1989) observes that when women are humorous they reverse conventional social situations by putting themselves in the foreground, thus claiming power of the situation. The significance of this research stems from the fact that the act of telling jokes is a social dynamic that might reflect on the gender roles in the society. Thus the examination of this dynamic (joke telling) in the Jordanian society might be seen as an indication of gender roles in Jordan.

2. Literature Review

There is a growing concern in how gender and humour interact in media and popular culture, with several papers written on the topic (e.g. Leggott, Lockyer, and White 2015). Weaver (2016) focuses on ways humour both maintains and disrupts gender. It explores the impact of humour which mediates discourses of gender, femininity, and masculinity to further the critical study of humour and comedy. Gender is an effective factor when conducting research on humour. Within this literature review it is argued that men and women use humour in different ways and for different purposes.

Hay (2001) analyzed conversational humour in same- and mixed-gender groups of friends in New Zealand. A major finding of Hay was that women used stories to establish solidarity. In earlier research in the U.S., Jenkins (1985) studied women's humour through participant observation, in a group of mothers of young children who met weekly at a neighbourhood church, she found examples of humour that gently mocked unrealistic expectations of mothers (one mother to another: ''I don't know about you, but my children are perfect'').

On the other hand, Wetherell and Edley (1999) investigated how men create and take on the social identity of 'being a man' in their talk. Using critical discourse analysis, the researchers identified three patterns that men used to describe their masculinity and position themselves socially as men. First, the pattern of being dubbed ''Heroic positions'', men aligned themselves with standard masculine ideals: being in charge at work or even in competitive athletics, overcoming other men, being bold; physically tough in addition to the ability of staying 'cool'. In the second pattern, ''Ordinary positions'', men described themselves as just normal, average guys. In the third pattern, ''Rebellious positions'', they described themselves as disparaging social norms of masculinity, they declared that they could cry, knit, cook, and wear jewellery.

In the scope of cyber-space humour, Nayef and Nashar, (2014:1) explored the stereotypical patterns for the representation of women in Egyptian sexist internet jokes. The paper revealed how language is manipulated and used for the purpose of maintaining the present status of gender dissimilarity and masculine dominance in the Egyptian society. The research addressed four themes: women and language; women in the private and public domains; women when considered as sex objects and finally the image of Egyptian women when compared to other women. The significance of the study was to examine one type of these social exemplification practices in the Egyptian society i.e. gender stereotyping. This stereotyping practice is explored through a mode of subordinate discourse, namely, humorous discourse. By means of a quantitative and qualitative analysis of Egyptian sexist internet jokes, the paper aimed at distinguishing how gender stereotyping encourages gender dissimilarity and masculine dominance in the country's social system. The main result of the study is that all the themes oblige the concept that men are considered superior and women inferior. Such themes are revealed through reproducing such negative exemplifications of women that Egyptian societies promote and keep the unwarranted masculine dominance.

In the same domain, some researchers attempted to explain that women do not normally use humour. Freud (1905) claimed that women do not need a sense of humour because they have less strong feelings to restrain than men. Grotjahn (1957) proposed that women do not normally tell jokes because joke-telling is considered an aggressive act. In a paper that is originally about stand-up comedy, Goodman indicates:"There is a lingering perception that women are not best suited to telling jokes but rather to being the punch lines." (Goodman, 1992: 286) Goodman's conception has been applied to joke-telling as well as to humour in general.

The attitude is slowly changing, as researchers begin the process of documenting and collecting humour used by both men and women within different contexts. Kramarae (1981) points out that men and women have different conceptions of the world and so of course have different joking interests. Societal norms support the idea that women have to work within the social symbols of the dominant group (under masculine dominance), and so it is more likely that women will recognize the joking interests of males than vice-versa. Kramarae believes this is the basis of the common affirmation that women have no sense of humour. In other words, females must understand male humour, while the opposite is not necessary. This is strongly supported by Jenkins (1985) who notes this dissimilarity: "I wondered why it was that when a man tells a joke and women don't laugh, we are told we have no sense of humour, but when a woman tells a joke and men don't laugh; we are told we are not funny." (Jenkins, 1985: 135)

Another study on using humour in natural settings is conducted by Collinson (2011). The researcher carried out an empirical study in relation to the importance of shop-floor humour, specifically in a lorry factory in the North West of England. He highlighted the relationships of gender identity and working-class resistance in the job force. After obtaining all the approvals, he studied seven stores, namely, departments of fabrication; axle assembly; tool room; loading bay; paint spray; stores and two machine shops which employed 250 males, most of whom were skilled engineers. The method of data collection was mainly through interviews, which were conducted on more than sixty workers by a regular writer, and were supported by an observation made by a non-participant/colleague. The researcher concluded that there has been contrasting elements in the joking culture, in which humour strengthened the values of the workers and worked as a way of control, conformity and resistance. In addition, he highlighted three aspects of jokes. Firstly, humour was resorted to as a way to resist boredom; secondly, humour was perceived as an outlet to fit in with the social pressure of the working class and show off masculinity; thirdly, jokes were used as a means to control those who don't put effort into their work or the ones who slack off.

The previous studies seem to have tackled humour and jokes from different perspectives; social and psychological, by focusing on the way men and women produce and appreciate humour. Few studies pay attention to gendered identities in jokes, especially from a pragmalinguistic viewpoint; studies on Arabic humour pertaining to gender roles and gender identities are very few in the Arab world. This study aims at partially filling this gap by addressing Jordanian jokes and analyzing them from a pragmatic perspective. This is explained and elaborated on in the methodology section below.

3. Method

Gender linguistics is engaged in answering the question of how men and women present themselves differently in language. Humour and joking as forms of linguistic behaviour is one site for displaying gendered identities. An increasing interest in the contribution of conversational joking (cf. the overview by Kotthoff 2006) and jokes (cf. Crawford 2003) to performing gender and reflecting gender arrangements has developed recently. However, this has been mostly studied on material from Western speech communities. This paper attempts to shed some light on the construction of gender identities and the display of gender arrangements in Arab jokes.

When gendered identity is examined in jokes, it is normally approached from a sociopragmatic perspective which gives focus and prime to the examination of the relationship between language and social context. In such studies the question of how gendered identity or roles are constructed in language use are explored. The focus of this paper is to give attention to the presentation of gendered identities in Arabic jokes. In particular, it attempts to answer the following research questions:

1- How are the feminine and masculine gendered identities projected in Arabic jokes?

2- Does the linguistic variety play a role in the construction of the gendered identity in Jordanian jokes?

The jokes for this paper were taken from the website Arabjokes.net where the concern was to find jokes with female subjects as well as those in the Jordanian dialect. The 20 jokes were divided into four categories based on their theme and were analyzed based on the knowledge resources of general theory of verbal humour

3.1. The General Theory of Verbal Humour

In order to answer the research questions the present researchers relied on the framework provided by the general theory of verbal humour to show the similarity between new versus old jokes and the theory of critical discourse analysis to show the type of gendered identity manifested in the old and new Arab jokelore.

The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) (Attardo and Raskin 1991; Attardo 1994: 219–229; 1997; 2001: 22–30, 2008: 108–115, Attardo et al. 2002) is a theory which is intended to describe how jokes are constructed and organised. It helps the actual analysis in this paper to explain joke similarity, because GTVH is seen as a tool for reference analysis of traditional vs. newly gendered roles in jokes. In this section a brief summary of the GTVH will be provided.

Attardo, (1994) states that in a formalised representation of a joke there are six knowledge resources (KRs) that should be discerned. These KRs are seen as parameters that help explain joke similarity (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 321–324; 1994: 223–226). In other words, different versions of a joke or similar jokes normally demonstrate shared KR values. The knowledge resources proposed in Attardo&Raskin's theory are:

- **Script Opposition (SO)** refers to themes such as real (unreal), actual (non-actual), normal (abnormal), possible (impossible).
- **Logical Mechanism (LM)** refers to the mechanisms which relate the different scripts in the joke. These can vary from a simple verbal technique like a pun to more multifarious logical mechanisms such as faulty logic or false analogies.
- **Situation (SI)** can comprise of objects, activities, instruments, props needed to tell the story. It captures the circumstances and activities that are suitable for a joke.
- **Target (TA)** realizes the actor(s) who turn out to be the "butt" of the joke. This classification helps to develop and manifest positive and negative stereotypes of ethnic groups, professions, etc. TA may be an ideological or abstract one. It is also worth mentioning that TA is an optional KR that can as well be absent (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 302).
- **Narrative strategy (NS)** identifies the narrative format of the joke, as a simple narrative, a dialogue, or a riddle. It tries to categorize the different types and subtypes of verbal humour. Attardo, (2001) expands the NS to include oral and printed humorous narratives of any length, not just jokes.
- **Language (LA)** Attardo, (1994:223) defines LA as "...all the information necessary for the verbalization of a text. It is responsible for the exact wording...and for the placement of the functional elements."

The first two KRs, LM and SO, are more abstract. SO calls to mind two scripts that stand in opposition. The GTVH assumes that "the number of oppositions exhibited by jokes is finite and limited" (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 308). LM is one more optional KR, which might be absent or unrealised in "absurd humour" (Attardo 1997: 409). Attardo and Raskin (1991: 311, 313, 320, 322, 325; see also Attardo 1994: 227 and Attardo 2001: 28) propose a "hierarchical joke representation model [...] based on the weak psychological intuitions about the degrees of similarity among jokes" (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 324). The lower a shared value of two or more jokes is situated in this model, the more similar the jokes are. The higher one or more shared values are on this scale, the lesser the degree of similarity (cf. Attardo and Raskin 1991: 323).

In sum, differences or similarities between jokes can be ascribed to or explained by shared values in KRs. Some of the newly gendered jokes show similarities with traditionally gendered jokes and can therefore be analysed on their background. The GTVH thereby provides a framework to detect and describe in what respect newly gendered jokes represent counterparts of the traditionally gendered jokes.

However, it will also become clear from its application in the analysis that the GTVH is not able to capture forms of similarity and modification that rely on features that cannot be linked to or explained in terms of one of the KRs.

3.2. Data Collection

The data of this study is retrieved from online sources for Arabic jokes. Jokes reflect humour which is conventionally gendered in society. The data of this study consists of 20 jokes that were extracted from the website Arab Jokes (https://arabjokes.net). The extraction of the jokes was based on those with females as the subject or punch line as well as those that reflected a Jordanian linguistic variety. The selection process kept in mind that the jokes should fall into four groups based on the theme of doing gender in relation to *Conventional gender roles*, *Matrimonial life, Flirting, and Infidelity*. The online collections represent the latest state of gendered joking in the Arab world. They show the present and ongoing changes as well as the modern tendencies in humorous interactions i.e. "the doing of gender in the Arab world".

Graham (2003: 27) views jokes as an actual oral site for the construction of gender that is "told and retold in oral communication, face-to-face with the listener." Computer mediated communication manifested in the form of social media and internet websites can be seen as a medium that is especially suitable for this genre of folklore because it permits jokes to be published quickly in a way that reproduces norms of gender enactment in oral communication. Furthermore, jokes on the internet can be easily approached immediately by a wide range of language users. Ong (1989, 1978) states that the internet is seen as an ideal medium for genres and forms that are characterised by secondary orality. In this context, jokes present a space for orality in different communities that are in Ong's terms "untouched by the written word".

Arab internet users normally show a higher level of education and have an urban lifestyle. Therefore, the online jokes echo principally the feel and values of the social class they represent. It is worth noting that online jokes are not contextualised, because such websites exclusively serve as the site for the collection of jokes i.e. any user is free to add jokes heard or invented.

3.3. Data analysis Procedures

The selected jokes will be critically reviewed and analyzed in accordance with the knowledge resources of general theory of verbal humour (GTVH) model to provide a convincing description of the different displays of gendered identities in Arab jokes. The present researchers provided a tentative literal translation of the selected jokes, so that the English reader can get a rough image about the gendered identities that are encoded in the Arabic scripts. For the convenience of the English reader, whenever an Arabic expression is mentioned in the analysis of jokes, a transliteration is provided using a Romanized transliteration system of Arabic language (see Appendix).

The focus of the analysis is on jokes that explicitly deal with gender issues in different ways. For example, at least one script in the SO deals with gender issues (gender specific conduct or role expectations, sexuality/infidelity etc.), the gender of the TA is relevant for the joke or the SI raises expectations concerning gender issues.

4. Discussion

This section begins with the analysis of conventional gender jokes in the Arab world. The stereotypical Arab wife is caring for her family, loving of her husband, responsible for the housework, and is docile and submissive. On the other hand, the husband is the provider, strong, doesn't show emotions, and gives orders and does not expect to be challenged. The traditional Arab family is a patriarchal one where the man is in charge and if any of his family step out of line, he will put them back in their place. The women are naïve, sheltered, and are incapable of critical thinking, and think their husband is the master of everything.

4.1. Conventional gender roles

1	فسألته زوجته لماذا تبكي حبيبي !!	A wife asks her husband why he is crying. He tells her
	فقال لها: رأيت فى منامي أميرة شديدة الجمال	he saw a beautiful princess in his dream who tried to
	تحـاول ان تأخذني منك و تقتلك	take him from her and kill her. His wife tells him to

calm down and stop crying, it was just a dream. To which he responds: that's what's making me cry!	فقالت له: اهدأ انه مجرد حلم فقال لها: ماهو هاد اللي منكد على سمای

The jokes selected for this section share themes of the wife being dumb/naïve and the husband being tough/violent. In the first joke, the script opposition is caring wife vs. dumb female. The wife displays traits of a conventional Arab woman who sees her husband in distress and tries to calm him down. Instead of being met with gratitude, she is put down by her husband and becomes the butt of the joke as he implies that he would readily leave her for another woman who is more attractive. The target of this joke is the wife who is subjected to laughter because of her blind trust of her husband. The narrative strategy used is the conversation strategy with some of the humour stemming from the use of both standard and colloquial Arabic.

The theme is carried through to jokes 2, 3, and 4. The women are portrayed as silly wives who, as in the case with jokes number 2and 3, are caught up in a love bubble on their own.

2	مرة واحده بتقول لجوزها بكرة عيد جوازنا تحب نعمل ايه... قالها ! بكرة الصبح نقف دقيقتين حداد	A woman reminded her husband that the following day is their wedding anniversary. She asked him what he would like to do on the occasion and he said "observe two minutes of silence to mourn the loss of a life."

In joke 2, the wife is trying to be romantic and fulfil her role as a caring wife by asking her husband what he would like to do on Valentine's Day – an occasion most think of as being more important to women than men. She, however, put her husband's preferences above her own. She is met with faulty logic as her husband tells her in colloquial Arabic that all he wants to do is stand in silence for two minutes to mourn his misfortune because he is married to her.

3	الزوجة: ليش ما قلتلي إنك فقير قبل ما نتزوج ؟! كان ما اتزوجتك !'''''' الزوج: إنتي ما كنتي تستوعبي..! من يوم ما شفتك وأنا بقولك أنتي كل ما أملك في هالدنيا! وإنتي تضحكي وتستحي، هاد اللي شاطرة فيه	A wife asks her husband why he didn't tell her he was poor before they got married. He tells her he tried to repeatedly. He would tell her, "you're all I own in this world" and all she did was simply blush and laugh.

Joke 3uses the same NS of conversation – because many Arab jokes focus on the bickering of couples – so it is only fitting that the jokes be told in dialog. The SO is possible vs. impossible, and the LM is faulty logic, as were the previous jokes. The wife reprimands her husband, accusing him of being dishonest about his finances while they were engaged. Her husband turns the accusation on her reminding his dumb wife that he repeatedly told her that he was poor, but she was too caught up in the romance to understand what he was saying. The wife is subjected to laughter because she was unable to pick up on the pun and thought "you're all I own" was him sweet talking her.

4	كركية اول مره تروح السوق أخدها جوزها على محل اواعي قال الها خذي ثلاث فساتين قالت شو الالوان الي اخذهن قال خذي احمر واصفر وفضي اخذت احمر واصفر وفضّت وبقولو لحد الان بدورو عليها	A woman from Karak went to a clothing boutique with her husband. He told her to take 3 dresses. She asked which colours should she take and he said, "red, yellow, and silver". She misunderstood the word silver for run away and grabbed the red and yellow dress and fled. (Fiddi in the Karaki dialect means to run away)

The last joke to share the theme of dumb female uses conversation as its narrative strategy. The use of colloquial

Arabic is crucial for the pun as it relies on paronymy. The subject of the joke is subject to laughter because she is silly and incapable of picking up on the paronymy. Here, the husband tells his wife to take 3 dresses and she understands the last colour as "run away" because in the Karaki dialect "fu$z$i" (silver) and "fu$z$i" (run) sound similar. The butt of the joke is portrayed as being blindly obedient to her husband, even if he is asking her to do something that breaks the law (shop lift).

The one joke that does not share the theme of stupid wife is joke 5which uses false analogy as the logical mechanism.

5	امرأة اجنبية ضربت زوجها كف فرد عليها: لماذا هذا يا حبيبتى فأجابته: كنت بتأكد من محبتك لي ثم احتضنته. سمعت اردنية بالقصة فحبت تقلدها وهى قاعدة مع جوزها ضربته كف قلبي الصغير لا يتحمل أكمل باقي القصه): المهم ان فصيلة الدم B لى حابب يتبرع	A Western woman slapped her husband on the face. He asked her why she did this and she responded: I wanted to make sure of your love for me. A Jordanian woman heard of the story and thought she would try to do the same with her husband. Her family is now asking for blood donations as she lays in hospital in critical condition.

In this joke, domestic violence is referred to and made a joke of as the text follows the conventional gender role of the man beating the woman to remind her who is in charge and that she should not dare to try to switch the roles. The woman stupidly tries to imitate Western culture by slapping her husband. She expected him to respond in the same manner as the Western man so she could declare her love for him. Instead, the Arab man reacted quickly and beat her so badly that she was hospitalized and required a blood transfusion.

4.2. Matrimonial Life

The second group of jokes is about marriage. In Arab marriages, the roles of the spouses are generally reflective of traditional gender roles. The husband is in charge, is controlling, and may be violent, while the wife is jealous, submissive, and takes care of her house and husband. With some of these jokes, an attempt is made to reverse the conventional matrimonial roles, but a running theme is the bickering of the spouses.

1	المرأة العربية من عجائب المرأة العربية تستطيع أن ترى شعرة بنت أخرى على ملابس زوجها من على بعد 300 متر وعندما تصطدم بسيارة أو عمود وهي عم تسوق أول كلمة. تقولها: والله ما شفتو !! كم انتي عظيمه ايتها المرأة العربية	The Arab woman is one of the unexplainable wonders of the world. She can spot another woman's single hair on her husband's shoulder from 300 meters away, but will tell you she never saw that lamp post she crashed into.

In joke 1, the wife is portrayed as insanely jealous. The script opposition is actual vs. non actual. Here the joke is told in Standard Arabic in the 3rd person narrative to add humour to the situation and to make the generalization sound more authentic and factual. Its logical mechanism is false analogy and faulty logic as it portrays the Arab wife as both jealous and a terrible driver. Her jealous nature can spot a single stray hair of another woman on her husband's shoulder from a distance, but is incapable of seeing something as clear as a lamp post on the road before she crashes into it.

2	اجمل مقولة تقولها الزوجة عندما ياتي زوجها من العمل الى البيت... ما تفوت انا بمسح كـــم انتي رومانسية ايتها الزوجة العربية	The most romantic thing a wife is capable of is to tell her tired husband when he comes home from work… "Don't come in! I'm mopping the floor."

Joke 2 is a stab at the unromantic nature of the Arab woman as she allows her household duties to kill the romance, leading to the faulty logic of the LM. The text is in the 3rd person narrative and uses a mix of standard and colloquial Arabic to help drive the laughter. It starts off in standard Arabic and gives the false impression that something romantic will follow, and ends in colloquial Arabic with the words many a husband hears – "don't come in! I'm mopping the floor."

3	اردني متزاعل مع مرته اتصل عليها سألها شو عاملة على العشى؟ قالتلو: سم الهاري قال: طيب.. تعشي ونامي لاني رح اتأخر !!	A Jordanian man who had had a fight with his wife called her up to ask what she had made for dinner. She responded with "poison". He said, "ok. Eat and don't wait up because I'm going to be late."

Joke 3 shares the theme of unromantic wife who is distracted by her household chores to worry about her husband. The SO of the joke is a clash between husband and wife. The conversation between the two spouses is in colloquial Arabic and tries to tip the traditional matrimonial balance of the Arab family, but the husband is quick-witted and makes the wife the butt of the joke when it should have been him. The couple have had a fight and while the man is out he calls his wife and is insensitive to her feelings, asking her what she has cooked for dinner. He expects her to fulfil her matrimonial duties despite the conflict between them, showing faulty logic. The wife does not keep to her traditional role of being submissive, and when asked what she has cooked, she responds with the very colloquial expression of "the worst of poisons". In turn, the husband quips, "Ok. Eat and don't wait up because I'm going to be late."

The final two jokes share the theme of matrimonial violence in some form or another. However, in both cases, the domestic violence is against the husband, not the wife.

4	شيخ حاول الترفيه عن الذين يحضرون درسه في المسجد فقال: إن أفضل سنوات حياتي كانت في حضن امرأة لم تكن زوجتي! انصدم الحضور ودهشوا من كلامه! فأكمل بعدها قائلاً: نعم! لقد تربيتُ في حضن أمي! فكبَّر الجميع وبعضهم دمعت عيناه! فذهب أحد الحاضرين إلى البيت، وأراد أن ينسخ ويلصق ما سمعه فقال لزوجته وهي تحضِّر له العشاء: إن أفضل سنوات حياتي كانت في حضن امرأة لم تكن زوجتي! يقول الدكتور وزير الصحة: العملية ناجحة واستغرقت (10) ساعات لفصل الصحن عن جمجمة الرأس	A sheikh told the congregation at the mosque that the best years of his life were spent in the arms of a woman who was not my wife. The congregation gasped with shock before he continued, "it was in the arms of my mother." One of the men who attended the sermon thought he'd tease his wife in the same way. He went home and started off by saying, "the best years of my life were spent in the arms of another woman who was not you." The doctors say the surgery was successful, but it took 10 hours to extract the plate from his skull.

In joke 4, the script opposition is real vs. unreal as well as violence vs. romance, and flirting that involves romance. The target of this joke is the Arab wife and is told in the 3rd narrative style and mixes between standard and colloquial Arabic. Here we see the Arab husband making an effort to be playful with his wife, but her jealousy rears its ugly head as she hears him say "the best years of my life were spent in the arms of another woman who was not you." Without waiting for the pun, she beats him and hospitalizes him.

5	أصلع قالولوا لو بدك شعرك يطلع خلي زوجتك تبصق في وجهك، قال: لو هالحكي صحيح كان شعري صار موكيت	A bald man was told if you want your hair to grow back, let your wife spit in your face. He told them if this were true, I'd have a rug right now!

The final joke of this section also uses the theme of domestic abuse and switches the normal roles so that the woman is the one who is abusing the husband, rather than the other way around. The script opposition is violence vs.

romance; the logical mechanism is false analogy. The target is the Arab wife who is portrayed as a controlling spouse of her hen-pecked husband. When someone gives her husband advice on how to make his hair grow back, he shows that he is subjected to abuse from her by responding that if his wife spitting on the bald spot would make the hair re-grow he would have a rug on his head by now. The humour here stems from the fact that the listener expects the wife to be the abused party, not the husband.

4.3. Flirting and Dating

In the Arab world, because most of the population is Muslim, the concept of courtship is quite different from Western countries. Devout Muslims who follow the teachings of their religion properly are supposed to interact with the opposite sex under strict guidelines. Of these guidelines, a male and a female should not be left alone without a third party present, making dating forbidden. Also, a man should drop his gaze and not ogle women as it is disrespectful and sexualizes them when their worth is much higher than that in Islam. Some Arabs have found that this topic is a gold mine for jokes, some of which will be analysed below.

1	واحد راح يقابل بنت اول مرة في كافيتيريا.. الشّب طلع الـ I pad وقال للجرسّون أعطيني Wi–Fi code.. !! وشّوف الأنسة شو بتشّرب... البنت ابتسمت بكل ثقة في النفس وقالت للجرسّون: Wi–Fi code عندكم بتعملوه بالحليب ولا بدون.. !!! المهم... الشّب راح على مالي وحالياً يحارب مع المجاهدين والجرسون مختفي من وقتها..	A guy went to a restaurant to meet up with a girl for the first time. He took out his iPad and asked the waiter for the Wi-Fi code, and to see what his date would like. The girl smiled flirtingly and asked, "do you make the Wi-Fi code with milk or without?" To cut a long story short, the guy joined the Mujahedeen in Mali and the waiter disappeared.

In the first joke the script opposition is normal vs. abnormal dating i.e. dating for love and marriage vs. deceitful dating for sex only. The logical mechanism is false analogy and the target of the joke is the Arab girl (who again is portrayed as dumb). In this joke, which is presented in the form of a conversation in colloquial Arabic, a boy is going to meet a girl at a café and asks for the Wi-Fi password from the waiter and instructs him to see what his date wants. The girl becomes the butt of the joke as she is clearly not familiar with what a Wi-Fi code is, thinking it is some sort of beverage, and asks if it's made with milk or without.

2	محشش مسافر وضاع لقيته بنت حلوه ودخلته بيتهم وقال لها: انا جوعان قالت له: بدك تاكل لحالك والا مع بابي؟ قال: لا لحالي بعدين سالها بقدر اتحمم؟ قالتله: بدك تحمم لحالك والا مع بابي؟ قال: لا لحالي ولما طلع الصبح سالها عنجد انتي كتير امورة شو اسمك يأ حلوة ؟ قال اسمي بابي وانت ؟ قال: انا اسمي حمار ابن كلب ابن سته وستين كلب	A stoner was travelling when he got lost and eventually found a house on the way. A beautiful woman let him in. He told her he is hungry and she asked him do you want to eat on your own or with Babi? He said "no, by myself." Later, he asked if he could shower. The woman asked him whether he wants to shower on his own or with Babi. He again said on his own. In the morning as he was leaving the house he told her "you're so beautiful, but I'm sorry I never caught your name." She told him, "Babi, and you?" The man kicked himself over and over for his stupidity.

With the second joke, the tables are turned and the man is made the butt of the joke as he is portrayed to be stupid and lets a perfect opportunity slip out of his hands. The joke's SO is real vs. unreal as the stoner is travelling in unknown parts and gets lost but is lucky to find a place to spend the night. As in the first joke, the logical mechanism is false analogy and the target is a flirting female who the man unwittingly rejects until it is too late to go back. In a conversational manner using colloquial Arabic, the woman asks him if he would like to eat with her and shower with her by asking if he would like to do these things "alone or with Babi". The punch line comes in the morning when he asks her what her name is and it turns out that it is Babi.

3	شب بسأل بنت شو أسمك ؟؟؟	Man: What's your name?
	حكتلو: مي.	Woman: May (Arabic for water)
	حكالها بارده ولا سخنه.	Man: Cold or hot?
	المهم الشب حالياً بالمستشفى في مسمار كعب صندل معلق براسو	Now the man is hospitalised with a shoe heel in his head.

The script opposition of the third joke is normal vs. abnormal and flirting vs. ridiculing. Its logical mechanism is faulty logic, and the target is an Arab youth who tries to flirt with a woman and is met with violence. Again, here as in the matrimony section, the female reverses the traditional gender roles and displays violent behaviour towards the man as he steps out of line. In its conversational format, the joke says a man asked a woman in colloquial Arabic (crucial for the pun to work) what her name is. When she responded "May" he turned it into a pun as May means water in Arabic, and asked her whether it's hot or cold water. She was unable to take his humour and beat him with her shoe.

4	طفيلي يغازل سمراء؟ قالها:يا أحلى كابتشينو شفته بحياتي.. قالت: تفو عليك. رد عليها: ياعمري ورغوه !! كماااان	A Tafili man was flirting with a brown-skinned woman. He called out to her, "you're the most beautiful cup of cappuccino I have ever seen." She spat in his direction and he responded, "Wow! With froth."

Joke 4 continues the theme of women not staying quiet to unwanted male attention and verbal harassment and responding in a manner not generally attributed to Arab women. In this joke where the SO is real vs. unreal, the LO is faulty logic, and the target is a Tafili man (a city in Jordan that is often the butt of Jordanian jokes) who is flirting with a dark-skinned woman. In colloquial Arabic he flirts with her, commenting on the colour of her skin by saying she is the most beautiful cup of cappuccino he has ever seen. She responds in a non-violent manner but in a way that shows anger, hatred, disrespect, and contempt by spitting on him. He remains unfazed to show her that his attention will not stop just because she doesn't welcome it, and exclaims, "Wow! With froth!" making her the butt of the joke.

5	واحد ماشي ورا وحده قالها الحلوه وراها مشوار؟. .. قالت لا الحلوه وراها حمار	A man was following a pretty woman in the street. He called out to her, "Does the babe have somewhere to be?" To which she responds, "No, I have a donkey behind me."

The final joke of this section also shows an Arab woman being strong and not staying quiet to street harassment. The SO is flirting vs. ridiculing, the LM faulty logic, and the target is Arab youth. The narrative strategy is conversational as it is a quick exchange between a man and a woman in the street, and the language is colloquial Arabic for the rhyme to work and make it relatable to the audience. The man is following a woman in the street and verbally harasses her by calling out to her "Does the babe have somewhere to be?" In the Arabic version of the joke, he says "warakimeshw<u>ar</u>" which literally means "do you have a trip behind you?" To which she responds "waray<u>hem</u><u>ar</u>"

(I have a donkey behind me) making a quick-witted response with rhyme and building humour on the negative associations of donkey in the Arabic culture in which a donkey is associated with stupidity. She managed to preserve her right to reject unwanted attention in a funny, non-violent, but ridiculing manner, making him the butt of the joke.

4.4. Infidelity

The final section of this paper deals with the theme of infidelity in jokes. It pokes fun at men and women who are unfaithful in their relationships. Infidelity, in its worse form and with certain conditions, is punishable by lashing in Islam. In the Arab world it is often the man who is unfaithful to his wife, and an abundance of jokes have been made on this. However, recently there have been jokes appearing on women behaving in an unfaithful manner as this phenomenon is slowly surfacing in the Arab society.

1	الشب: حبيبتي ابعتيلي صورتك منشان اضل متذكرك	Guy: Babe, send me your photo so I can keep you with me always.
	البنت: طيب حبيبي ابعتلي صورة اختك لاضمن حالي	Girl: Ok babe. But send me a photo of your sister first for collateral.
	هون ابليس طفا السيجارة وقعد يسمع ويتعلم....	The guy sends her a photo of his other girlfriend, pretending it's his sister. She in turn sends him a photo of her other boyfriend's sister, pretending it's herself. To this Satan started to take notes to educate himself.
	الشب بعتلها صورة حبيبته التانية ع اساس انها اخته	
	هون ابليس جاب ورقة وقلم وصار يكتب ليتعلم	
	استلمت البنت الصورة وبعتتله صورة اخت حبيبها التاني	
	ع اساس انها هي	
	هون ابليس شطب الي كتبه ورجع كتب مرة تانية	And then she sent the first boyfriend's sister's photo to the second boyfriend as though it were her. To this Satan cried, repented, prayed and then went to sleep.
	وراحت بعتت صورة اخت حبيبها الاول لحبيبها التاني	
	ع اساس انه هي	
	هون الشيطان مزق الورقة وبكى وصلى ركعتين ونام	

In the first joke the script opposition is flirting vs. cunning behaviour as it turns out that both parties are cheating on each other. The LM is false analogy, the situation is dating, the target is Arab youth, and the joke's narrative strategy is conversation in colloquial Arabic. For this joke to make sense to a non-Arab audience it must be explained that both culturally and religiously, dating without the knowledge of the families is forbidden. The amount of cunningness that is present in this joke is quite mind-boggling. When the man asks the woman for a photo of herself she makes a deal with him and asks for a photo of his sister as collateral. She does this so that if her boyfriend ever threatens to expose her to her family that she is indecent and dates men, she has something to fight back with. In the Arab culture, men are very protective of their female relatives and will not allow them to be the topic of anyone's conversation in a bad way. This is why the word "ukhtak" (your sister) is considered a swear word and can start a war. The man doesn't question her request but cunningly sends a photo of his other girlfriend as though it is his sister. Once she received the photo, the woman sent him a photo of her other boyfriend's sister, and then sent the photo she just received to her other boyfriend as though it were her own.

2	مرة بنت رجعت عالبيت ومعها سيارة شبح.. بحكيلها	A girl came home once with an expensive car. Her father asked whose it is. She told him it was hers and he responded with "on your honour?!" She said, "what do you think? Your money is enough to pay for this car?"
	ابوها لمين هاي ؟	
	البنت: الي	
	الأب: بشرفك ؟!	
	البنت: ولا يعني بمصاريك ؟ .	

The second joke is also very culturally specific because it deals with the concept of "honour" in the Arab family. The script opposition is vice vs. decency, the logical mechanism is faulty logic, the situation is domestic, and the target

is an Arab girl who is having a conversation with her father in colloquial Arabic. The girl comes home with an expensive car, and the father, fulfilling his role as the patriarch, asks her who the car belongs to. She tells him it's hers and he responds in a very colloquial manner "with your honour?!" He intended the expression to mean "are you for real?" but to carry the joke she took the other meaning of the word which means her virginity. In the Arab culture if a female loses her virginity outside of matrimony then she has lost her honour and has put her family to shame. The punch line here is when she implies that of course it was on account of her virginity because he doesn't have the sort of money required to buy a car like that. She prostituted herself in exchange for a car.

3	واحده راحت تكشف عند الدكتور. الدكتور قالها: مبروك، عندي الك خبر زي الفل يا مدام! قالتله:... آنسه من فضلك... قالها: عندي لكي خبر زي الزفت على راس أهلك يا سافله! /	A girl went to a gynaecologist for a check up. He told her "Congratulations. I have some excellent news for you Madam!" She said, "Call me Mademoiselle, please" The doctor frowned disapprovingly and said, "I have some terrible news for you, slut!"

Continuing the theme of women holding on to their virginity until marriage is joke 3 where the SO is fidelity vs. infidelity, the LM is faulty logic, the situation is medicine, and the target is an Arab girl who has gone to the doctor's office for a check-up. In this conversation taking place in colloquial Arabic, after conducting the examination, the doctor tells her he has fantastic news for her, assuming she is married. The joke is made when he discovers that she is still single and the same piece of great news because catastrophic and will bring shame to her and her family. The doctor is very judgemental of her because she was not being faithful to her religion or her family when she chose to indulge in pre-marital sex and ended up getting pregnant.

The final two jokes of this section deal with the infidelity of men.

4	لأم بتسأل ابنها: بتعرف نيوتن؟ الولد: لا الأم: لأنك مابتتبه لدروسك الولد: بتعرفي ريهام؟ الأم: لا الولد: لأنك مابتتبهي لجوزك	Mom: Do you know Newton? Child: No. Mom: Of course you wouldn't know! You don't pay attention to your teacher in class. Child: Do you know Reham? Mom: No. Child: Of course you wouldn't. You don't pay enough attention to dad.

In joke 4 the SO is careless student vs. careless wife. The LM is false analogy and the target is the Arab wife. In a conversation between a boy and his mother, she wants to test him on his knowledge of Newton and reprimands him when he says that he does not know. She becomes the butt of the joke however when her son asks her does she know Reham and when she replies in the negative, he accuses her of being distracted from her husband or she would know that he is cheating on her with Reham.

5	تعريف الرجل الوفي: هو نفس الرجل الخاين بس عمره ما انكشف	The characteristics of a loyal man are the same as those of a cheater. The only difference is the loyal man hasn't been caught yet.

In the last joke which is told in the 3rd person narrative in both colloquial and standard Arabic to give levity to the subject, the characteristics of a loyal man are discussed. The joke's SO are fidelity vs. infidelity, the LM is faulty logic, the situation is educated, and the target of the joke is the Arab husband. The joke implies that there is no such thing as a

loyal man – all men are cheaters, just some have been caught and others have not.

5. Conclusion

It can be seen from the analysis presented above that the humorous construction of feminine and masculine gender identities in the Arab Jordanian jokes is in a state of flux due to the ongoing social changes that have been taking place from the time of rural communities representing conventional roles of man being the patriarch, and the woman being the subordinate and submissive individual who is in need of the patriarch's protection and provision. However, the transition to an urban lifestyle that took place in the Jordanian society in particular and the Arab world in general enacted new gender roles in the Arab communities where men and women became independent co-operators to ensure living in the modern society, basically because of the influence and reception of Western life trends.

The present study revealed that some new gendered identities have emerged and some other conventional gender identities have been reinforced into the Jordanian modern society. Firstly, there are some jokes that present feminist tendencies where the female is represented as a quick-witted protagonist who can outsmart the patriarch, rejecting male approaches and dominance. This can be seen as a result of the emergence of the new Western ways of life in the Jordanian society due to women taking on new social responsibilities and roles in the society such as being able to work outside the home domain. She is no more the passive victim of the male dominance in society. Such constructions of identities encode new evaluative perspectives of women in the modern Jordanian Society.

Secondly, the projection of women as cheaters in the Jordanian society is evidence of the new roles that women have acquired. She is able to move out of the patriarch's traditional restrictions. Traditionally, the typical situation about infidelity stereotypes the man as the person to be unfaithful in the society, because the wife does not take care of the husband or that he is a sex monster who only thinks of a woman as a sex object. The freedom he has to move outside the home circle in the society gave him the chance to meet new women to achieve such ends. However, women are leading a new lifestyle as well and they are now able to go outside to meet men so she can play the role of the cheater as in joke 1, 2, 3and 4 in the infidelity section.

Finally, the linguistic variety used in Jordanian jokes is a mixture of both standard Arabic (SA) and Jordanian Spoken Arabic varieties which are seen as colloquial varieties. Those varieties are indicative of the social variation in the Jordanian society and serve as the benchmark for the social change that took place between conventional (rural) vs. modern (urban) gender identities. For instance, the Karaki Jordanian Spoken Arabic in Joke 4 of the conventional roles joke is a Bedouin (rural) linguistic variety in the south of Jordan that is used to mark the traditional gender roles of the woman being inferior to man and is submissive to his will and helps in her projection as the dumb female. On the other hand, the word 'Babi' in joke 2 of the flirting section is a pet name normally used in Madani Jordanian Spoken Arabic (MJSA) which is representative of the urban lifestyle in Jordan. This lifestyle portrays men and women differently in the society and gives them fairly different cooperative and complementary roles in everyday life. In the above analyzed joke we can see that the table is turned against the man and he is seen as the dumb person who stupidly rejects the company of a beautiful woman. All in all, we can see that the knowledge resource of language where colloquial spoken Jordanian varieties are used in jokes serve their purpose of achieving the desired humorous effect, and to bring the contrasts of the gender identities i.e. conventional vs. modern to light as well as help in the appreciation for humour of Jordanians of these jokes. It is worth mentioning that the analysis offered in this study is tentative and by no means exhaustive. More studies on Arabic Jokes would help validate the conclusions of the present study. It is also recommended to conduct studies on gendered identities in Arabic stand up comedies. Further research could address how shift of tense is employed to achieve humour in Arabic culture and other cultures. Findings of relevant studies on tense time relationships across languages might be helpful to conduct these studies on humour see AlShuaibi (2019).

Appendix
Transliteration System for Arabic Language Symbols of Consonants

Arabic Symbols	Specifications	Roman Symbols
أ	Voiceless glottal stop	?
ب	Voiced bilabial stop	b
ت	Voiceless alveolar stop	t
ث	Voiceless interdental fricative	th
ج	Voiced alveopalatal affricate	j
ح	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative	h̲
خ	Voiceless uvular fricative	kh
د	Voiced alveolar stop	d
ذ	Voiced interdental fricative	t̲h̲
ر	Voiced alveolar flap	r
ز	Voiced alveolar fricative	z
س	Voiceless alveolar fricative	s
ش	Voiceless alveopalatal fricative	sh
ص	Voiceless alveolar emphatic fricative	s̲
ض	Voiced alveolar emphatic stop	d̲
ط	Voiceless alveolar emphatic stop	t̲
ظ	Voiced interdental emphatic fricative	z̲
ع	Voiced pharyngeal fricative	9
غ	Voiced uvular fricative	gh
ف	Voiceless labio-dental fricative	f
ق	Voiceless uvular stop	q
ك	Voiceless velar stop	k
ل	Voiced alveolar lateral	l
م	Voiced bilabial nasal	m
ن	Voiced alveolar nasal	n
ه	Voiceless glottal fricative	h

Symbols of Vowels

Arabic Symbols		Specifications	Roman Symbols
Short Vowels	Fat̲ha	Front half-opened unrounded	a
	D̲ama	Back close rounded	u
	Kasra	Front open spread	I
	أو	as in doktoor (دكتور) in Arabic and "orphan" in English	o
Long Vowels	آ	Front open unrounded	aa
	أوو	Back close rounded	uu
	إي	Front close unrounded	ii
Semi-Vowels	ي	Non-syllabic Palatal	y
	و	Approximant	w
		Non-Syllabic Labio-Velar approximant	
Diphthong	إيه	as in leih (ليه) in Arabic and "tail" in English	ei

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الهويات الجندرية في النكت الأردنية

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ملخص

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى الكشف عن الهويات والأدوار الجندرية السائدة في النكات الأردنية العربية، وتتكون بيانات الدراسة من عشرين نكتة تم اختيارها من مصدر من خلال الإنترنت للنكات العربية (**https://arabjokes.net**) تم تحليل جميع النكت في ضوء النظرية العامة للفكاهة اللفظية (**GTVH**) التي استخدمت كإطار نظري لتوضيح الخصائص الرائدة لهذه النكت الجديدة ولمقارنتها بالأنواع الجندرية التقليدية. وكشف تحليل البيانات للنكت العربية الأردنية من خلال الإنترنت عن وجهة نظر ذكورية غالبًا ما تكون مسيئة للمرأة في النكات ذات أسلوب الحياة الريفية – التي تكون المرأة فيها عادةً هدف النكت في الأردن. ومن ناحية أخرى، فإن النكت الحديثة التي تم تحليلها في هذه الدراسة ، تقدم دليلًا على اتجاهات جديدة للأدوار الجندرية وخاصة الأنثوية من خلال روح الدعابة الأردنية. يثبت التحليل أيضًا أن استخدام النظرية العامة للفكاهة اللفظية يساعد في الكشف عن الأنماط الجندرية المتشابهة في النكت العربية الأردنية.

الكلمات الدالة: المجتمع العربي الأردني، اللغويات الجندرية، النظرية العامة للفكاهة اللفظية.