

**Toward a Discoursal Structure of Jokes**  
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**Abstract :**

A **JOKE** can be defined as a form of humour in which the funniness mostly culminates in the final sentence, called the **PUNCHLINE**. This paper sets out to provide evidence for the hypothesis that a common structure for jokes can be identified across languages. English and Arabic have been chosen as areas of investigation. Thus it examines the procedures by which jokes are opened, processed and finally terminated in these two languages. It is found here that there is a global structure peculiar to jokes across languages. The structure is composed of two main stages: the prelocation and the location. Each of these two stages has its own internal structure. The prelocation functions to provide the congruity against which and in reason of which the location can be perceived as incongruous.

**The Model**

The model adopted is mainly Nash's (CF. Nash, 1985). According to this model, a joke consists of two stages, namely prelocation and location. Prelocation is made up of three further elements, viz the signal, the orientation, and the context. Location, on the other hand, embraces the locus of joke. Some modifications have been made in the model, namely the element set-up has been added to include the signal, the orientation and the situation in which the joke is told as in the case of the narrative joke, the element problem-solving has been subsumed under the context on the ground that every context has some problem solving to be settled later by the location; the element resolution has been placed under the locus since once the punchline or the location in which the locus lies is resolved the joke will be understood.<sup>(1)</sup> These three elements have been added to the model on the basis that any humorous process involves three steps: set-up, problem solving, and resolution. We shall proceed under the assumption that the prelocation provides the congruity in the light of which the punchline is seen as incongruous.

**The Data**

The data are published jokes which are assumed to be representative of those in circulation in the population.<sup>(2)</sup> So they are divorced from their social setting, and therefore provide no evidence regarding the characteristics of the tellers of jokes or the social circumstances under which they are told. In other

words, the jokes selected for analysis are self-contained texts (Attardo and Chabanne, 1992:2).

The data consist of 160 jokes, 80 of which are English jokes chosen from a miscellaneous collection of articles and books, while the other 80 jokes are Arabic taken from varied booklets that were published in the 1980s. The jokes are grouped into three categories, viz one liners, two liners and narrative jokes.

### **The Goal**

This paper is devoted to the establishment of the structure of written jokes in English and Arabic.<sup>(3)</sup> It investigates the procedures by which jokes are opened, processed and finally closed.

### **Categorization of Jokes**

Jokes come in different forms and sizes. They may appear in the form of sentences, question-answer structures, and narrative structures. In what follows, we shall introduce and define the commonest types of jokes, namely one liners, two liners, and narrative jokes.

### **One Liners**

One-liner jokes are those which are told by one character. They have a particular structure with short build up and a short ending which usually contains the major incongruity bringing about comic effect.

Such jokes can be described in the same manner as the narrative jokes since they are extracted from their original context of occurrence (Attardo and Chabanne, 1992:167). One of the parts of a joke that is left unsaid may be the context of the joke on the grounds that it can be deduced from the situation in which the joke is told.

English one liners include "definitions and verdicts", "captions and annotations", "glossed propositions", "transformational tags", "catchword forms", "parodic allusions", "exhortations", "Jonathanisms" and "false premises and flawed inferences" (see Nash 1985).

Among such one liners there is a type which may consist of one sentence or more depending on the joke-teller himself who may pause between the first sentence, which is usually a rhetorical question requiring no answer from the hearer, and the rest of the joke. Therefore, such jokes are told by one character since he/she assumes that no response will be forthcoming. Let us consider the following joke.

### **Joke No.3**

Did you hear about the little moron who cut off his fingers so he could learn shorthand?

The humour of the joke is discovered at the point of the unstated association between "cut off his fingers" and the pun "shorthand".

Arabic one liners, on the other hand, are normally declarative sentence. They are usually one sentence long. This type of joke can be conceived of as containing a narrative. Arabic one liners are not to be understood as isolated utterances; rather they are part of a larger context supplying a frame for successful interpretation. Consider the following joke.

### Joke No.13

Fad wa: hid ra: h za: r rigas ta: wli:

Lit: One went (visited / die) returned backgammon<sup>(4)</sup>

In this joke the context is provided by the hearer's / reader's background knowledge about the habit of visiting certain places, and not just by za:r which is, as it were, the surface context of the joke. In other words, the context is what the originator and the addressee assume about the circumstances in which the joke is told.

### Two Liners

Two liners are jokes that are supposed to be told by two characters. They either come in the form of question and answer or in the form of text and rejoinder. As for the question and answer jokes, the answer given is not what the audience expects; rather it violates logic and audience expectation in such a way as to arouse some thought before laughter (Gabin, 1967:39).

The text and rejoinder type of two liners, on the other hand, consists of a dialogue between two participants, one of whom puts forward a statement and the other answers with a playful comment (Nash, 1985:48).

English question and answer jokes comprise "riddles, comedian-and-straight man jokes, and the whole schoolyard gallimaufry of bananas, elephants, waiters, what do-you-dos and how-can-you-tells". Text and rejoinder jokes include public notices, religious texts, mural avowals, etc. Examples:

### Joke No.15

How does an elephant come down a tree?

It stands on a leaf and waits for autumn.

This joke belongs to the question and answer type of English two liners.

### Joke No.20

Doctor, doctor! I feel like an electric wire! How shocking!

This joke represents text and rejoinder type of English two liners.

Arabic question and answer type of two liners, on the other hand, involves riddles and other kinds of jokes beginning with interrogative words such as "lima:ða:-why". Such jokes are represented by dyadic interactions such as between wife and husband, patient and doctor, pupil and teacher, etc. One of the two characters usually undertakes to ask a question while the other character replies in a humorous manner that provokes laughter. Text and rejoinder jokes also make use of dyadic interactions in which one of the characters propounds and the other replies with mischievous comment. Following are two examples of such jokes:

#### Joke No.6

?attabi:b mata: ja?ti: kal ?alamu bišidda

?almari:d ċindama: ?adfaçu laka ?uġrataka ja:duktu:r

lit: The doctor: when come (to) you the pain intensely

the patient: When pay (I) you charge your O doctor

This joke is of the question and answer type illustrated above. It begins with the interrogative word "mata:-when" or its dialectal equivalent "šwakit?ašwaqit/jamta:" which are used to ask for time. It comes in the form of dyadic interaction between the doctor and the patient.

#### Joke No.8

?al ?u:la: zawgi: juħibbul hayawa: na: ti ġidda:

?aθθa:nija ?arġu ?an taku:ni: tuħibbi:nahu miθlama: juħibbukū.

lit: The first: husband my likes the animals very

The second: hope (I) that be you love him as loves (he you).

This joke belongs to the text- and rejoinder type. The dyadic interaction is also utilized in this joke bringing two characters face to face, namely "?al?u:la:- the first" and "?aθθa:nija-the second"

#### Narrative Jokes (5)

Narrative jokes are mostly composed of two parts, the narrative introduction and the dialogue. Most of the narrative jokes end with a dialogue, that is, quoted lines attributed to a character.

The function of the narrative introduction is that of supplying the necessary information to define the "fictitious situation, sometimes place and time reference and situation data, but mainly the social identification of the characters" (Attardo and Chabanne, 1992:166).

The narrative introduction or the set- up normally begins with sentences or phrases culled from conventional set of situations (Schaeffer cited in Hetzron, 1991:66).

The dialogue usually brings two characters-seldom more than two – face to face. Generally speaking, the two characters do not enjoy the same status, one of them being of high status, and the other of a low status. Thus, such examples as judge/thief, teacher/student, customer/waiter, doctor/patient, etc. can be shown to stand for the high/low characters. Chanfrault (1992:14) remarks that both the high characters and the low characters are interchangeable because they achieve the same functions in that each character of inferior status tries to make fun of the character with whom he/she is confronted.

Many of the English narrative jokes we laugh at may be told in an actual context or are situational in origin, that is, they are shown on television or movies; such jokes are usually retold in narrative form (Trachtenberg, 1979:93). When people start retelling what they saw on TV or movies they are expected to follow a certain speech pattern.

Let us consider the following beginnings of such jokes: A guy walks into a psychiatrist's office...

This old lady is walking along a beach in Miami...

Clearly, such openings are characterized by using the historical present tense. They usually contain a brief description of the main characters of the jokes.

As for Arabic jokes, the characters, circumstances, and actions are stereotypes, i.e. they are typically characterized as having conventional features. Consider the following examples:

#### **Joke No.2**

Ka: na ?aḥadul fallā: ḥi: na jahrisu bajdarahu  
lit: was one (of) the peasants guarding threshing floor, his...

#### **Joke No.19**

?ištara: baxi:lun ḥala: ḥa tuffa:ḥa:t...  
lit: bought a miser three apples...

In joke No.2 the peasant is a dominant figure in rural areas.

He plays a central role as spokesman for tradition, referring to the figures of roots and soil. A peasant is often presented in Arabic jokes as in English 'rednecks' as being goodhearted native, and of limited education.

Joke No.19 employs a miser as the main character. Misers have long been presented in Arabic jokes as loathsome people in that they are employed as butts of jokes. This arises from the fact that miserliness, due to religious considerations, is an undesirable trait in Muslims.

Such patterns of one liners, two liners and narrative jokes will be explored throughout the present paper.

### The Structural Elements of Jokes in English and Arabic

The purpose behind analysing a joke is not to explain it for if a joke should be explicated before being understood, it would lose much of its humour. Therefore, our purpose is to relate the joke as a text to our perception of its linguistic structure.

Jokes are made up of two main components: the prelocation and the location. The latter is extremely short in comparison with the former. Each of these two components will be dealt with in detail.

#### The Prelocation

Prelocation is responsible for providing the joke with its scenario and characters. It consists of two elements, viz the set-up and the context.

The main function of the prelocation is to provide the congruity which is necessary for the punchline in order for it to be incompatible with.

#### The Set-up

Set-up is taken as an umbrella term covering the signal, the orientation, and the situation in which the joke is told in case of the joke being a narrative one. The first sentence of each narrative joke shares part of the context in that it contains the situation in which the joke is narrated, but for the purpose of our analysis we shall regard it as representing the set-up leaving what follows it to constitute the context.

#### The Signal

The signal provides the reader/listener with a warning of an approaching joke. The listener/reader is aware of convention in which jokes are told for he/she has already come across something like them; that convention makes him/her well prepared for the acceptance of jokes or humour in general (Nash, 1985:6). For instance, an opening like "Did you hear about..." foretells the advent of a joke, so the listener or reader is going to prepare to be amused. Hence, we can say that such openings stand for signals which, in turn, serve as declarations of intentions.

Signals do not mean a joke follows, they mean interpret this i.e. what is coming, what is being included or even what precedes as a joke (Ibid:36).

Signals in English jokes come in various forms. They may come in the form of:

1. A tag of the kind that introduces a funny story or a humorous observation.
2. The rhetorical or the prepositional question such as "Did you hear the one about...?"
3. The existential opening 'There's this ...'
4. A question that forewarns of a riddle such as:  
What's a ... ?  
How do you ... ?

Howmany ... ?  
Where do ... ?

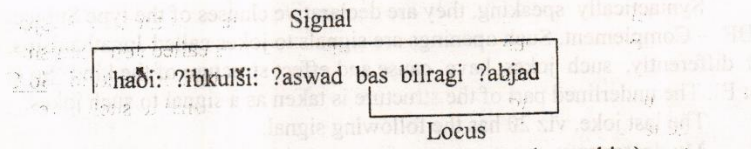
5. The cliché – imperative such as ‘Be x, Do y’ as in:  
Be alert – English needs lerts .  
Help save our tree – eat a beaver . (Ibid : 34)

Sometimes signals come in disguised manners; such being the case one can perceive them through the actual form in which they are presented. Consider the following example:

You remember Sunset Strip-where the unneat meet to bleat.  
There is no explicit signal to this joke. But as the joke is based on alliteration; the signal can be arrived at from the actual form in which it is presented. In other words, the signal is created by the unexpected and exceptional repetitions of a sound or a group of sounds (see Nash, 1985).

Arabic jokes take various forms of signals all of which foretell the joke’s imminent appearance. For instance, some signals come in the form of an anonymous character, e.g. ‘wa:ħid , fad wa:ħid , ?ahaduhum – one (of them)’ or in the form of interrogative words such as ‘lima:ħa:- why’ , ‘munðu mata:- – since when ... etc, or in the form of the existential opening as in: ‘ka:na huna:ka huna: lika – was/were there.

We may come across some signals that span the locus, in such a case they are called ‘spanning sequence’ as in the following example:



(lit: luck my in all things black but in water melons white)  
This piece of humorous discourse is said when a person is not in keeping with the living standard or otherwise. The context is what the speaker/writer and the hearer / reader assume about the circumstances in which the discourse is uttered. There is no explicit signal to the humorous piece of discourse. In such a case. The signal spans the whole discourse including its locus.

Now that we have shown what is meant by the signal, we shall proceed to point out the signals of jokes included in the present study.

**Signals to one liners**  
According to the data, all English one liners have signals of various forms. To begin with, the total number of one liners in our corpus is twenty.

Jokes 1-10 have the following opening as a signal:  
Did you hear about ... ?

More widely, the signals to jokes 1-10 can be reduced to the following form:

Operator + S + hear + prepositional phrase ... ?

Joke No. 11 take the following signal :

Do you know the joke about ... ?

Jokes No. 12 And 13 have one word to be signalled with, namely 'wanted'. This word is considered a conventional signal.

The signals of the other jokes up to No. 20 assume various forms.

Jokes No. 14, 15 and 16 comprise 'enigmatic propositions' followed by explanatory comments. They are as follows:

14. Her face was like a million dollars.

15. You have a mind like a mineral railway.

16. A woman is like a piano.

The propositions are recognized as signal of intent to the one-liner jokes. Nash (1985: 41) calls the jokes that carry such signals 'glossed propositions'.

Jokes No. 17, 18 and 19 take the following signals:

17. My uncle Sam is so tall that ...

18. Our lily's mouth is so big ...

19. He's so mean ...

Syntactically speaking, they are declarative clauses of the type Subject - BE - Complement. Such openings are signals to jokes called Jonathanisms. Put differently, such jokes have 'cause and effect structure of the kind 'So C that E'. The underlined part of the structure is taken as a signal to such jokes.

The last joke, viz 20 has the following signal:

My doctor says ...

Table (1) summarizes what we said about the signals to English one liners with their frequencies and percentages.

As for Arabic one-liner jokes, the total number is 20. Jokes 1-10 take the following signal: wa:hid-one.

Jokes No. 11 and 12 take ?ahaduhum-one of them as their signal, which is a variant form of "wa:hid". Jokes 13-14 have the following signal: 'fad wa:hid-one'. 'Fad' can be thought to stand as a determiner of the noun head 'wa:hid'. It is very much like the English indefinite article a(n).

Jokes 15-19 are signalled by the word 'ragul-man', while joke No. 20 is signalled by the noun phrase 'muddarris fag-ra:fa-teacher (of) geography'.

All the above -- mentioned signals are regarded as a conventional manner of introducing Arabic one liners. The change of word order, that is, placing the subject before the verb marks such jokes as one liners in Arabic.

Table (2) presents the signals of Arabic one liners with their frequencies and percentages.

**Signals to two Liners:****1. Question and Answer:**

Including in the corpus are twenty English jokes of the form question and answer. The question usually embraces the signal to such jokes among other things as the orientation and the context.

The first twelve jokes begin with the question element 'why' which is regarded as the signal of intent to such jokes as in the following examples:

Why did ... ? jokes No. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11.

Does ... ? jokes No. 4 and 10.

Do ... ? joke No. 8.

Can't ... ? joke No. 3.

Is ... ? joke No. 12.

Jokes 13-20 are signalled by the question elements 'How'. Here are the examples:

How can you tell ... ? jokes No. 13, 17, and 20.

Does ... ? jokes No. 15 and 16.

Do ... ? joke No. 19.

Would ... ? joke No. 18.

Are ... ? joke No. 14.

It is to be noted that such openings as "How can you tell ... ?" with which jokes No. 13, 17 and 20 begin combine together the signal and the orientation. Consider the following joke:

**Joke No. 13**

How can you tell the difference between a weasel and a stoat? Well the weasel's weasily identified and the stoat's stoatally different.

In this joke the reader / listener recognizes that the joke is going to be 'How can you tell' types of jokes.

As can be shown, the question is one the various kinds of information (wh)- questions asked by one of the participant which is answered by another participant.

The corpus also includes twenty jokes of the form question and answer. The question comprises the signals to such jokes and the contexts to be dealt with later on. Table (3) gives some representative examples of signal of intent to these jokes.

**2. Text and Rejoinder**

Twenty English jokes of the text and rejoinder form are contained in the corpus. We shall show how signals figure out in such jokes.

Jokes 1-10 have the following opening as their signal:

'I say, waiter ...'

It can be represented by the following form S + V + Vocative.

Involved in the signals are some emphatic with which rejoinders begin. Such expressions can be textually bound markers. In other words, they are considered to be multiple themes. According to Halliday (1985:53), a simple theme is one which consists of only one element, normally ideational in meaning. It is also called topical theme. A Multiple theme has, besides the ideational elements, one or more elements expressing interpersonal and / or textual meanings (ibid). Halliday (1985:53) states that the unmarked sequence of these elements within English multiple themes is, textual-interpersonal - ideational. Here are some examples illustrating multiple themes:

- Well you jokes No. 1 and 2.

Textual Topical

- All right I

Textual Topical

- Yes, sir the fly joke No.

Textual Interpersonal Topical

The following rejoinders are represented by simple themes:

- That must joke No. 3

Theme

- Don't blame me joke No. 4

Theme

Jokes 11-20 are signalled by the following vocatives:

Doctor, doctor !

These jokes have signals represented by repeated vocatives which elsewhere may be represented by any form of address.

The corpus includes twenty Arabic jokes of test and rejoinder type. Table (4) presents some representative examples of the signals of intent to such jokes. Clearly, such jokes have explicit signals manifested by a couple of characters one of whom puts forth a statement and the other replies in a humorous manner.

#### Signals to narrative jokes

Twenty English jokes are included in the corpus. The openings of narrative jokes are selected from a set of conventional situations some of these openings are marked by explicit signals, which introduce the narrative and indirectly introduce the jokes. The term 'set - up' will be used to represent the conventional situations selected for the beginnings of narrative jokes. Table (5) lists the set - ups of English narrative jokes.

Jokes 1-4 have an explicit marker that signals the beginning of a narrative in which the jokes is encapsulated, namely once upon a time:

Jokes 5-9, on the other hand, can be observed to have another explicit marker that signals the narrative and hence the joke included in it, namely the formula: there BE + Complement.

The first sentence of each joke sets the scene, giving the listener or reader a brief description of the person involved and the situation. There are some points which need to be considered:

1. 30% (6) of the 20 jokes use the present tense, two of which are in the present continuous tense.
2. 20% (4) of the jokes use the demonstrative 'this'. The use of the present tense and the demonstrative has the semantic implication of not creating a gap between the speaker / writer and the listener / reader. In other words, they are used to make a surrounding present in which the listener / reader is, in some sense, the central character.

The corpus embraces 20 Arabic narrative jokes. Table (6) gives some representative examples of the set-ups of these jokes.

As shown in Table (6), Arabic narrative jokes tend to be narrated in past tense. There are some explicit markers, which signal the beginning of such narrative jokes. They are:

Ka : na ?āḥadul (was one)...

Ka : na ?āḥaduhum (was one of them)...

Ka : na huna: ka (was there) ...

Such markers signal the beginnings of narratives which include the jokes, i.e. they indirectly introduce the jokes.

The tendency of Arabic narrative jokes to be narrated in past tense serves to throw the events in the past, which, in turn, has the semantic implication of detaching the hearer / reader from the characters involved in the jokes, which would otherwise arouse their sensitivity. Furthermore, using past tense would create an intellectual, social or political distance between the joke-teller and the really of the society in which the joke is told. However, this is Arabic culture specific.

From what has been said we can deduce that the signal is an obligatory element in one liners and two liners. Narrative jokes, on the other hand, comprise the element 'set - up' which introduces them. This element may contain explicit signals to narratives, and hence to jokes such as "Once upon a time" and "There BE Complement".

### The Orientation

The orientation is the subject matter of a joke. It indicates that the joke will be the property of certain thematic type, for instance, it is going to be an Irish joke, or Polish joke, or a waiter joke, or an elephant joke. Sometimes it breaks in with the declaration of a context. However, according to our view, it is included in the set - up.

Morons, fools, clowns, buffoons, gluttons, drunkards, and misers have all served as objects of ridicule in English jokes.

The most well known stereotypical characters are John Bull in Great Britain dating back to 1712, Brother Jonathan in the US who dates from the nineteenth century, and also Uncle Sam dating back to the First World War.

In Arabic jokes certain stereotypes such as the traditional figure of the mother -in- law, the miser, the peasant ... etc. have been utilized as objects of ridicule. Also employed as objects for derision are such conventional situations as between wife and husband, patient and doctor, judge and accused, etc. The most well known stereotypical character in the history of Arabic humour is guha dating back to centuries, who is distinguished by a set of stereotypes such as his donkey. He has become, in Arab folklore, a kind of hero gathering in his personality the shortcomings and good qualities of many personages. Consequently, he has become an object of ridicule over centuries.

#### Orientations of one liners

Jokes 3-10 poke fun at the low intelligence of little morons by exaggerating their morality. In the same vein, joke No. 1 makes fun of the Irish, while jokes No. 2 and 11 have the cross-eyed teacher and the dirty window as their orientations. The remainder of jokes 12-20 have no explicit orientations. In this case, some signals allude to them, for instance, the orientations of jokes No. 12 and 13 can be known via their signal, i.e.: the signals indicate the orientation in addition to their main job of signalling the intention to jokes.

As for jokes 14-19, the first clause in each can be conceived of as involving the signal and the orientation. Consider the following examples:

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Her face was like a million dollars    | joke No. 14 |
| You have a mind like a mineral railway | joke No. 35 |
| A woman is like a piano                | joke No. 36 |

#### Signal + orientation

The first three examples are similes involving 'like', whereas the others involve clauses of result of the type : so + adj + (that) :

Finally, joke No. 20 does not seem to have any kind of orientation.

Table (7), on the other hand, list the orientations of Arabic one liners.

1. Arabic one liners utilize anonymous characters. As a matter of fact, anonymous characters are employed in written jokes only.
2. As regards spoken jokes, specific stereotypes such as certain ethnic minorities are found to be made fun of - Again, this is culture specific:

#### Orientations of two liners

##### 1. Question and Answer

The orientations of English jokes No. 5, 13, 17, 18, 19 and 20 are contained within the signals as shown in the following examples:

**Joke No. 5**

Why did you put that spider in my bed ?  
Cos I couldn't find a frog.

**Joke No. 17**

How can you tell if an elephant's been in the fridge?  
Cos there'll be giant footprints in the butter.  
The signals of such jokes include a note of orientation, telling the listener / reader that the jokes are going to be a 'Why did you do' and a 'How can you tell' types of jokes.

Other examples of orientations are shown below:

- Elephant                 jokes No. 3, 6, 15, and 16
- Giraffe                 joke No. 1
- How would you        joke No. 14
- What do you get       joke No. 20

All Arabic question and answer type of two-liner jokes, on the other hand, contain clear orientations represented by parts of the signals.

Here are some examples:

- ?alqa: di: (the judge)                 }
- ?almuttahaam (the accused)            } jokes No. 3, 16 and 17
- ?almu callim (the teacher)            }
- ?attilmi:ð (the pupil)                 } jokes No. 7 and 18.

Such orientations are represented by the participants in dyadic interactions. They constitute only parts of the signals, the other parts are carried by the interrogative words. Such being the case, the orientations and the signals of the question and answer type of jokes are not the same in that the former are included in the latter, i.e. being parts of them.

**2. Text and Rejoinder**

The orientations of English and rejoinder structures are included in the signals. Let us consider the following examples:

- I say, waiter!            jokes 1-10
- Signal + orientation
- Doctor, doctor!        jokes 11-20
- Signal + orientation

The orientations of Arabic text and rejoinder structures are the same as the signals. Below are some examples (see Appendix 7).

- ?azzawga (the wife)                 }
- ?azzawg (the husband)               } jokes 2, 10 and 16
- ?alqa:di: (the judge)                 }
- ?almuttahaam (the accused)           } jokes 3 and 15

Clearly, the orientations of the jokes are carried by the figures of the couple. It is to be noted that whenever there is a wife in the dyadic interaction, the possibility is that the second pair will be a husband, likewise, we expect an accused if there is judge as one of the participants. In such cases, the relationship is conflictual. For instance, the figure of the wife is ambivalent: either she is flirtatious or she is a virago and talkative; while the figure of husband is full of complaints about his wife and thinks of nothing but escaping from the house in order to be free and comfortable.

**Orientations of narrative jokes:**

Here are some examples of the orientations of English narrative jokes:

- A gorilla } joke No: 1
- This Englishman, } jokes No. 5, 6 and 8
- This Irishman and }
- This Scotsman }
- The absent – minded professor } joke No. 17

The orientations of Arabic narrative jokes can be categorized into certain general patterns.

1. ?ahadu + n.(where n. is variable normally showing some profession).

**Examples:**

- ?ahadul quarawjji: n (one Oof) the villagers) joke No. 1
- ?ahadul falla : h:n (one (of) the peasants) joke No. 2
- ?ahadu ddurafa: ? (one (of) the humorists) joke No. 20
- 2. ragulun + attribute. Examples:
  - ragulun ?acma: (man blind) joke No. 6
  - ragulun ?ummijjun (man illiterate) joke No. 7
- 3. Attribute
  - ?acma: wa ?acrağ (blind and lame) joke No. 9
  - baxi: lun (miser) jokes No. 16 and 19
- 4. ?ahaduhum (one (of) them) joke No. 11

To summarize, it clearly appears that some English jokes have explicit orientations, while others do not contain orientations. As a result, orientation is an optional elements in the structural, formula of English jokes; whereas in the Arabic jokes 'orientation' is obviously an obligatory element. In most cases it is represented by anonymous characters such as wa:hid – one, ragulun – a man, etc.

The characters representing jokes' orientations can easily be substituted one for the other on the 'paradigmatic' axis 'without affecting the structure of the jokes (chanfrault, 1992:14). Hence, many jokes are similar in that they are paraphrases or variants of the same joke (Attardo and Raskin, 1992: 295).

### The Context

The context is an element with which jokes can not dispense.

As every joke is about something, it comprises some props constituting the context of the joke. Firth (1958:7) puts forth a significant statement saying that 'the complete meaning of a word is always contextual, and no study of meaning apart from a complete context can be taken seriously.' As such, context is of vital importance to a joke since it provides the background for the punchline to function. As jokes are said to have narratives they are supposed to have contexts of their own. The context, in conjunction with the set-up, provides the congruity in the joke by dint of which the punchline is seen as incongruous.

There are two types of context, viz defined context and implied context (Nash, 1985: 35). The former is self evident, i.e. being presented exhaustively, while the latter is supposed to leave something for the hearer's/reader's conjecture. Put differently, part of the context is supplied by the speaker/writer, and the rest is arrived at by the hearer/reader by way of adding some encyclopedic knowledge stored under the concepts, and thus extending the given context (Chlopicki, 1994: 94). Dolitsky (1983: 40) points out that 'both what is impertinent and what belongs to the domain of mutual knowledge will be left unsaid' We shall proceed under the assumption that every context contains a problem solving element which develops the context that supplies the necessary contextual information for the punchline to work.

#### Contexts of one liners

Table (8) shows the contexts of English one liners. Such contexts can be found to have the following pattern.

1. 50% (10) of the data involve the relative pronoun 'who' followed by a past tense verb followed by its complement.
2. 20% (4) of the data contain implied contexts.
3. The rest of the contexts involve the relative pronoun 'that' nouns, that + effect clause, if clause, etc.

Table(9), on the other hand, presents some representative examples of the contexts of Arabic one liners that are included in. Certain generalizations can be made for the contexts of such jokes.

1. They are very short, namely consisting of V + Comment or of Topic Comment.
2. They use verbs in the past tense.
3. Most of them contain play on words, i.e. puns.

Every context of these one liners contains a problem to be solved by the punch line. But the solution comes, as a violation of or a deviation from the norm. By the norm we mean the rules followed in language and society such as linguistic and conventional rules respectively.

### Contexts of two liners

#### **1. Question and Answer**

The contexts of English jokes are included in the questions which, in addition, include the signals and the orientations. Table (10) lists the contexts of this category of jokes.

Table (11) gives representative examples of the contexts of Arabic question and answer jokes. It is to be noted that such contexts are included in the questions which comprise, as well the question words that are part of the signals and that they involve tenses such as the present tense, the past tense and the present continuous tense.

More widely, all the contexts in both languages pose problems which are supposed to be solved by the punchlines, but the solutions come in contradiction to what the hearers / readers expect.

#### **2. Text and Rejoinder**

Table (12) presents the contexts of this category of English jokes, while table (13) supplies a few representative examples of the contexts of Arabic jokes.

There are some points which need to be considered:

1. The contexts of the text and rejoinder jokes are supplied by the texts, whereas the rejoinders are responsible for providing the punch lines.
2. Such contexts, are supposed to build up the congruity against which the punch lines would be seen incongruous.
3. All the contexts of Arabic text and rejoinder jokes appear in the present tense.

### Contexts of narrative jokes

The contexts of narrative jokes are relatively longer than the contexts of one liners and two liners. The first sentence of each narrative joke is taken to provide the joke with the 'set-up' which comprises the signals, the orientation and the situation in which the joke is told. Consequently, the second sentence of each joke is taken to trigger the context which is to be understood as the surroundings, in the widest sense, that enable the participants in the humorous process to interact, and that make the linguistic expressions of their interaction intelligible. The context of the narrative joke begins, strictly speaking, after the set-up is introduced and ends before the explosion of the punch line. Its function is that of developing the set-up by giving the necessary contextual information that can be regarded as, so to speak, the prehistory of the punch line. Such developments in the narrative jokes serve to promote the expectations of the listeners / readers.

Table (14) provides the beginnings and the ends of the English narrative jokes leaving the rest of contexts to be observed in the corpus.

Of the 20 jokes 80% (16) appear to make use of dialogues between two or more characters. The dialogues come towards the end of the jokes the last line

of which in all probability establishes the punch line. The alternating moves of the characters serve to develop the joke and thus maintain the attention of the listener / reader. The rest of jokes are devoid of dialogues, so they are said to be straight narratives.

The context, which is one constituent of the prelocation, involves various techniques that function to keep the listener / reader in suspense waiting for the punch line to explode. The context of, say, joke No. 2 makes use of repeating sentences, that is, sentences are recursively repeated in order to make the listener / reader eagerly await the arrival of the punch line.

Table (15) offers some representative examples of the contexts of Arabic narrative jokes. We can conclude the following:

1. 85% (17) of the jokes are found to make use of dialogues mainly between two characters the last of whom sets the punch line.
2. Two jokes, viz 4 and 20 introduce some dialectal words in the dialogues. Such dialectal words play a significant role in adding the local flavour to the jokes. Of importance is the fact that the sudden shift in reading from standard Arabic to colloquial Arabic is in itself humorous for it comes as something unexpected in the flow of reading.

More widely, the function of the direct speech in English and Arabic narrative jokes is either that of introducing narrative, emphasizing a special relevance of the utterance, or indicating narrative distance from it (kolek, 1985: 150).

### The Punchline

The Punchline contains the most fundamental elements in the joke text, viz the incongruity. Oring (1989: 351) puts forward an important claim that it is the presence of the punchline which differentiates a joke from a funny story. All the other elements of the joke already investigated work toward the punchline because of its crucial nature.

The recognition of the incongruity to which the punchline gives rise must be sudden (Raskin 1985 cited in Oring 1989: 351). Hence a joke evokes laughter for it requires a sudden cognitive reorganization on the part of the listener / reader. Consequently novelty is essential to the reorganization because if the joke has been heard before the punchline will not be sudden, and hence the listener / reader has nothing new to reorganize (Ibid: 352). Raskin (1985) indicates that the semantic script-switch triggers within the punchline are of two kinds, those which depend on an ambiguity and these which depend on a contradiction (cited in Attardo and Raskin 1991: 299).

The place of the punchline has also been a matter of debate. Oring (1989) insists on the final position of the punchline saying that if any phrase or sentence follows it, then the joke would be threatened. Attardo and Raskin (1991), on the other hand, remark that the punchline is placed in the final

position or a prefinal one, if followed by something inconsequential and anticlimatic. It is true that the punchline is seated at the end of the joke, but that does not prevent it from being followed by some material, say, a prepositional phrase or an adverbial.

### **The Locus**

The locus element has its seat in the location. It may be a word or a phrase whose function is to discharge the joke. Nash (1985: 34) states that 'recognition of locus is partly a matter of consulting the mental dictionary that lists the relevant generic details, and in part a response to the general structure of the joke. Hence, one cannot recognize the locus of a joke if he is not able to perceive the humour (get the joke). In other words, the locus would lose its effect in case that the listener / reader does not resolve the incongruity. It goes without saying that resolving the locus of a joke implies resolving the locus. Consequently, the punchline is the most important feature of a joke because it is responsible for carrying the incongruity that makes a joke.

### **Punchline of one liners**

Table (16) presents the punchlines of English one liners and the loci in which they lie. The loci are underlined.

Of the 20 jokes 40% (8) are found to be based on language. They are as follows: 2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 16. Consider the following joke. Joke No. (2).

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who couldn't control his pupils?

A typical language-based joke differs from that which is based on a contradiction of situations in that it presupposes a lexical item that can be given at least two different readings. In this joke, the word pupils is both the punchline and the locus of the joke since they match each other. In other words, the punchline equals the locus semantically. The punchline draws on the ambiguity of the word pupil, which is a homograph pun (same writing). The lexical item pupils refers, either to persons who are leaving in school or circular openings in the centre of the iris of the eyes. Therefore, the punchline on which the incongruity rests derives from the ambiguity of the lexical item pupils.

It must be said that Rashin's (1985) script trigger functions to uncover the ambiguous element by combining the senses of each lexical item in the joke to find a meaningful interpretation of the text.

### **Joke No. 10**

Did you hear about the little moron who took a bike to bed with him so he would not sleepwalk?

The joke starts with a rhetorical question which is in itself a humorous from since it seems absurd to ask a question when we do not expect an answer. Put differently, the question is not a sincere speech act of asking.

The humour of this joke rests on the punchline which is based on a contradiction, namely one can not prevent oneself from sleepwalking by taking a bike to one's bed.

Table (17) provides representative examples of the punchlines of Arabic one liners. The loci are underlined.

Of the 20 jokes surveyed, 20% (4) are based on a contradiction of situations, viz 14, 15, 16 and 20, while the rest are found to be based on language. Let us consider the following jokes:

#### **Joke No. 20**

Muddarris gura:fijatin da:ca wugida fi:l xarrita .

Lit: teacher (of geography) was lost was found in the map.

The joke results from the incongruous juxtaposition of situations since what we find in a map are names of countries and capitals but not human beings. So the humour of this joke rests on the incongruity that defines the punchline which, in its turn, defines the joke.

#### **Joke No. 12**

Wa:fid ra:h hab riġa ? matfu:m.

Lit: one went (loved / seeds) returned ground.

The joke is based on language. The incongruity of the punchline is caused by the lexical item hab - loved / seeds, which is homophone pun involving two senses. The passage from sense 1 to sense 2 must be unexpected and immediate. The element which causes the passage from sense 1 to sense 2 is called 'script switch trigger' to use Raskin's terminology.

#### **Punchline of two liners**

##### **1. Question and answer**

The punchlines of question and answer type of jokes are shown in Table (18) with the loci of jokes being underlined.

40% (8) of the 20 jokes are based on language. These jokes carry the following numbers: 1, 2, 9, 11, 12, 13, 18 and 19. The rest are found to be based on a contradiction of situations. Consider the following jokes:

#### **Joke No. 11**

Why did the jokey take hay to bed?

To feed his nightmares.

This joke is based on the homonymous pun 'mares' It is this which discharges the joke as its locus.

'Mare' refers to a terrible, frightening dream when it is associated with the lexical item 'night' and it also refers to a female horse or donkey. So the incongruity stems from this ambiguity which must be resolved in order for the punchline and hence the joke as a whole to create a humorous effect.

#### **Joke No. 8**

Why do people go to bed?

Because the bed won't come to them.

This joke is based on a contradiction of situations. It is about the predictability of discourse. The addressee wants to know the reason why people go to bed, but the answer comes in contradiction to their expectations.

Table (20) presents the punchlines of some representative Arabic question and answer jokes.

Only 20% (4) of the 20 jokes, namely 7, 8, 9 and 19 are based on language. The rest are based on a contradiction of situations. Here are two examples:

#### **Joke No. 7**

?almuddarris lima:ða: fašala na: biliju: n fi: fathi çakka:

?attilmi:ð li?annahu nasijal mifta:h

Lit: The teacher: why failed Napoleon in (conquering/opening) Acre.

The pupil: because he forget the key.

This joke is based on language. The question is deliberately misunderstood by the pupil in that he takes the question at its face value exploiting the two senses which the lexical item *fath* has *fath* in this joke does not mean 'unfasten', but rather, 'conquer'. The pupil, however, chooses to interpret *fath* in the former sense. Hence Grice's maxim of Quantity and the maxim of Quality are breached, and 'with then, but' to a lesser degree, the maxims of Manner and Relevance. Whether by design or in mere foolishness, the teacher is given the runaround. So the humour of the joke is expressed through the misfiring speech acts.

#### **Joke No. 2**

?alqa:di: lima:ða: saraqta ssa: ça

?assa:riç: likaj ?açrifa biha:l waqta sajjidi:

Lit: The judge: why stole you the watch?

The thief: To know (I) by it the time sir.

This joke is based on a contradiction of situations. The import of the question as a speech act is purposefully misread; it is obviously meant to be an accusation, but the thief accepts it as a mere question.

## 2. Text and Rejoinder

The punchlines of the text and rejoinder type of jokes are presented in Table (20) with the loci being underscored.

45% (9) of the 20 jokes are observed to be based on language.

They are as follows: 1, 3, 4, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19 and 20. The rest of the jokes are based on a contradiction of situations. Consider the following examples:

### Joke No. 17

Doctor, doctor ! I feel like a sheep!

That's baaaaaad.

This joke is based on language or, to be more specific, on the phonic substance. The lexical item 'baaaaaad' imitates the sound of a sheep via the repetition, in writing, of the vowel (a) which represents a long vocalic sound. In addition to that, lexical item 'bad' conveys the sense of 'unhappy state'. So the incongruity emanates from the onomatopoeic word "baaaaaad".

Seen from another perspective, 'baaaaaad' is congruent with sheep. So here there is a game played depending on the cooperation between the speaker and the hearer.

### Joke No. 8

I say, waiter ! There's a fly in my soup!

Don't worry, sir, he won't drink much.

In this joke, the import of the statement as a speech act is misread on purpose. It is intended to be a complaint, but the waiter accepts the statement at its face value ignoring its implicature as a complaint. It is this negligence on the part of the waiter which creates the incongruity manifested by the contradiction of the two situation, i.e. : that of the customer and the waiter.

Table (21) presents the punchlines of some representative Arabic text and rejoinder jokes.

All the jokes are found to be based on a contradiction of situations. Consider the following joke:

### Joke No. 4

?alq:di: lišša:hid mudda jadalak jumna waflif

?šša:hid qafwan sajjidi: ?inni: jasra: wi:

Lit: The judge to the witness: Extend hand you're the right and swear.

The witness: Sorry sir I left handed.

The incongruity of the jokes rests on the rejoinder which bears the punchline. It arises as a result of a contradiction of situation.

The import of the directive as a speech act is deliberately misinterpreted by the witness in order to escape swearing.

**Punchlines of narrative jokes**

Table (22) brings to light the punchlines of English narrative jokes as well as the loci contained in them.

Only 25% (5) of the 20 jokes are based on language, viz jokes No. 3, 6, 7, 11 and 13. The remainder are based on a contradiction of situations. Let us consider the following jokes:

**Joke No. 11**

This joke is based on language. The ambiguity arises from the different syntactic interpretation of the underlined prepositional phrase in "I rushed out and killed a huge lion in my pajamas". 'In my pajamas' is meant (by the hunter) to be an adjunct. However, the little girl takes 'in my pajamas' to be a postmodifier of the noun head 'lion'.

**Joke No. 19**

This joke has a composite punchline, the lieutenant's exclamation and the act of escaping (Hetzron, 1991: 85). The cadet asks what appears to be the same question but with the intention to discover whether the lady knows his individual and absolute identity to report him to the general. As she does not get to know who he is, he flees the punishment by not telling her his identity.

It is to be noted that 75% (15) of the 20 jokes end in dialogues. The dialogue of joke No. 18 consists of more than two characters. All the jokes, except joke No. 18, end in dialogues which are signal - pulses. As for joke No. 18, it has a parallel structured punchline in that it is made up of four pulses. Jokes No. 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 do not end in dialogues. So we can call them straight narrative jokes.

Table (23) offers some representative examples of the punchlines of Arabic narrative jokes.

Only one joke, viz joke No. 20 is found to be based on language. The rest are based on a contradiction of situations.

**Examples:**

Joke No. 20 (The literal translation is given below).

Went one (of) the humorists to dentist not knows (he) him, and after made (he) him denture told him the doctor: think (I) now can (you) eat everything. Replied to him the humorist saying: doctor do allow (you) me try (not to pay / eating) charge your.

The joke centres upon the lexical item ?a:kul which is a sort of wordplay meaning either 'not to pay' or 'to eat' given the context of the joke. Hence, the incongruity of the joke consists in the two different interpretations of the word ?a:kul. The dentist takes ?a:kul to mean 'eat', which is the normal interpretation of this word; whereas the humorist takes it to mean 'not to pay', which is the unexpected interpretation of the word, and hence the raison d'être

of the humour of the joke. Taken from another viewpoint, the humour of the joke stems from the humorist's flouting of Grice's manner maxim, which calls for avoiding obscurity and for being concise.

Joke No. 6 (The literal translation is given below)

Was man blind searching in magazines (of) the library and saw him man and told him: how read (you) the magazines and you blind? And replied to him the blind saying: I not read O sir I look at the pictures.

The joke is analysed as being based on a contradiction of situations, which, in turn, establishes the incongruity of the joke. It goes without saying that any blind person is supposed not to be able to see, but this supposition is contradicted by the blind man's reply. In other words, the blind man's reply comes in contradiction to what the listeners / readers have expected and taken for granted.

There are some points which need to be considered as far as the Arabic narrative jokes are concerned:

1. 75% (15) of the 20 jokes end in dialogues all of which are between two characters the second of whom sets the punchline. The rest are deemed to do straight narratives since they do not end in dialogues.
2. The punchlines of the jokes are signal - pulse ones.
3. Some dialectal words can be observed in some dialogues, which serve to add the local flavour to the jokes.
4. All Arabic narrative jokes tend to be narrated in the simple past tense.

One last point to be made is that there are some types of material which are seen to follow the punchlines and consequently the loci of the jokes in both languages. Such types of material as prepositional and adverbial phrases, forms of address and explanations are semantically poor in information in that they can be moved or omitted altogether without affecting the integrity of the jokes.

### Conclusion

It has been proved through the analyses of the jokes in English and Arabic that jokes are highly structured. Although jokes come in different shapes and size they share a common structure, viz the prelocation and the location. Each of these stages consists of further elements. The prelocation is made up of two elements, namely the set-up and the context. The set-up, in its turn, involves the signal, the orientation, and the situation in which the joke is told as in the case of the narrative jokes. Location, on the other hand, embraces the locus of a joke.

**Notes**

1. Location is taken to be the spatial representation of the punchline.
2. The reason why we have chosen jokes among various humorous situations is that jokes are more formalized and are more readily diffusible than other forms of humour. In addition, jokes come, as it were, with 'a certificate of funniness' (Attardo and Chabanne, 1992: 3).
3. The jokes selected for analysis in this study are written to be told. However, we have subjected some spoken jokes to the written norms but even here they are intended to be spoken.
4. In case of there being a pun in an Arabic joke the senses of the pun will be given in the literal translation between two brackets.
5. All the jokes are said to have narratives (Attardo and Chabanne, 1992). However, we call this type of long jokes as narratives for a lack of a better term.
6. The second participant represents the addressee in the question. In other words, it informs us about the identity of the addressee.

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|   | Signal patterns and examples   | Frequencies | Percentages |
|---|--|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Operator + S + hear + preposition<br>Did you hear about ... ?  | 10          | 50%         |
| 2 | Operator + S + know + preposition<br>Did you know the joke about ... ?   | 1           | 5%          |
| 3 | No + finite participial clause<br>Wanted   | 2           | 10%         |
| 4 | Enigmatic propositions<br>Her face was like a million dollars -<br>You have a mind like a mineral railway -<br>A woman is like a piano - | 3           | 15%         |
| 5 | Subject + BE + Complement<br>My uncle Sam is so tall<br>Our lily's mouth is so bug<br>He's so mean.                                      | 3           | 15%         |
| 6 | Subject + verb<br>My doctor says   | 1           | 5%          |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>20</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

Table (1) Patterns and examples of signals to English one liners with frequencies and percentages.

| Joke No. | Signals                                   | Frequencies | Percentages |
|----------|---|-------------|-------------|
| 1-10     | Wa:fid (one)                              | 10          | 50%         |
| 15-19    | Ragul (a man)                             | 5           | 25%         |
| 11-12    | ?ahaduhum (one of them)                   | 2           | 10%         |
| 13-14    | Fad wa:fid (one)                          | 2           | 10%         |
| 20       | Muddarris gura:fja (teacher of geography) | 1           | 5%          |
|          |   | 20          | 100%        |

Table (2) Signals to Arabic one liners

| Joke No. | Participants                                       | Question Type                              |
|----------|--|--|
| 3,16,17  | ?alqa:di: (the judge)<br>?almuttaham (the accused) | Hal (do) ... ?<br>Lima:ða: (why) ... ?     |
| 7,18     | ?almaq'allim (the teacher)<br>?atilmī: (the pupil) | Lima:ða: (why) ... ?<br>Ma:ða: (why) ... ? |

Table (3) Examples of the signals to Arabic question and jokes.

| Joke No.  | Participants                                       | Frequencies | Percentages |
|-----------|--|-------------|-------------|
| 2,7,10,16 | ?azzawga (the wife)<br>?azzawg (the husband)       | 4           | 20%         |
| 3,15      | ?alqa:di: (the judge)<br>?almuttaham (the accused) | 2           | 10%         |
| 9         | ?al?awwal (the first)<br>?aθθa:ni: (the second)    | 1           | 5%          |

Table (4) Examples of the signals to Arabic text and rejoinder jokes.

| Joke No. | Set - Ups  |
|----------|--|
| 1.       | Once upon a time a gorilla ... a coffee bar.                   |
| 2.       | Once upon a time there was ... he was.                         |
| 3.       | Once upon a time one of king ... an inn.                       |
| 4.       | Once upon a time there was ... aeroplane.                      |
| 5.       | There was this Englishman ... desert .                         |
| 6.       | There was this Englishman ... wishing-well.                    |
| 7.       | There was this Englishman ... crash.                           |
| 8.       | There was this Englishman ... island.                          |
| 9.       | There were paratroopers ... New York.                          |
| 10.      | Two Irishmen were talking ... useful .                         |
| 11.      | The big game hunter was telling ... show - and - tell period . |
| 12.      | A gentleman who was ... medicine.                              |
| 13.      | Famed Chinese diplomat ... day.                                |
| 14.      | A beggar who had tried ... dumb.                               |
| 15.      | A woman meets a man ... Jewish.                                |
| 16.      | Count Aristide runs into ... no - see.                         |
| 17.      | The absent - minded professor takes ... colleague.             |
| 18.      | A newspaper reporter goes ... investigation.                   |
| 19.      | The general is giving ... the cadets.                          |
| 20.      | A high governmental official is inspecting ... hospital.       |

Table (5) set - ups of English narrative jokes.

| Jokes No. | Set - ups   |
|-----------|---|
| 6.        | Ka:na raḡulun ?acma: jufattišu fi: maḡgalla: ti maktaba (lit: was man blind searching in magazines (of) the library).             |
| 9.        | Ka:na ?acma: wa ?aḡraḡ jatamašaja: ni: fi: ttari: qi (lit: were blind and lame walking in the road).                              |
| 10.       | Ōahaba ?ahadu ḏḡurafa: ?i ?ila: tabi:bi ?asna: nin la: ja?rifuhu (lit: went one (of) the humorists to dentist not knows (he) him) |

Table (6) Example of the set - ups of Arabic narrative jokes.

| Joke No. | Participants        |
|----------|---------------------|
| 1-10     | Wa:ḥid              |
| 15-19    | Raḡul               |
| 11-12    | ?aḥaduhum           |
| 13-14    | Fad wa:ḥid          |
| 20       | Muddarris ḡugra:fja |

Table (7) Orientations of Arabic one liners.

| Joke No. | Contexts  |
|----------|---|
| 1.       | Who missed a penalty                                  |
| 2.       | Who couldn't control                                  |
| 3.       | Who cut off his fingers                               |
| 4.       | Who cut off his arms                                  |
| 5.       | Who killed his parents                                |
| 6.       | Who jumped off the Empire State Building              |
| 7.       | Who cut off his hands                                 |
| 8.       | Who stayed up all night                               |
| 9.       | Who took a ruler to bed                               |
| 10.      | Who took a bike to bed with him                       |
| 11.      | Implied context                                       |
| 12.      | Pokets  |
| 13.      | Coffins   |
| 14.      | Implied context                                       |
| 15.      | Implied context                                       |
| 16.      | Implied context                                       |
| 17.      | That he has to climb a ladder                         |
| 18.      | She daren't laugh                                     |
| 19.      | He stands on one foot at a time                       |
| 20.      | If I do nothing for my cold it'll last for seven days |

Table (8) contexts of English one liners

| Joke No. | Contexts                                      |
|----------|---|
| 2.       | Risam da: ?ira (lit: drew (circle / office))  |
| 6.       | Tab sibaḥ (lit: entered (bathed / roasaries)) |
| 17.      | ?ištara: ʕasa (lit: bought stick)             |

Table(9) Examples of the contexts of Arabic one liners

| Joke No. | Contexts                                      |
|----------|---|
| 1.       | Have to wear sun - glasses ?                  |
| 2.       | Take his ladder to school ?                   |
| 3.       | Put an elephant in a sandwich ?               |
| 4.       | Have a long neck ?                            |
| 5.       | Put that spider in my bed ?                   |
| 6.       | Cross the road ?                              |
| 7.       | Take a shower ?                               |
| 8.       | Go to bed ?                                   |
| 9.       | Become an electrician ?                       |
| 10.      | Wear red - white - and - blue braces ?        |
| 11.      | Take hay to bed ?                             |
| 12.      | Cruel ?                                       |
| 13.      | The difference between a weasel and a stoat ? |
| 14.      | Getting on with your exams ?                  |
| 15.      | Come down a tree ?                            |
| 16.      | Go up tree ?                                  |
| 17.      | If an elephant's been in the fridge ?         |
| 18.      | Avoid starvation on a desert island ?         |
| 19.      | Find out of where a flea has bitten you ?     |
| 20.      | Which end of the worm is his head ?           |

Table(10) Contexts of English question and answer jokes.

| Joke No. | Contexts  |
|----------|---|
| 1.       | ?alfiçil ma:di: ligurnlati ?ana: ?açl: 5<br>(lit: the verb the past of sentence 'I live') |
| 2.       | Saraqta ssa:ca (lit: stole (you) the watch)   |
| 3.       | Faslin jasqutul matar (lit: (season / class) fall the rain)                               |

Table(11) Examples of the contexts of Arabic question and answer jokes.

| Joke No. | Contexts                                      |
|----------|---|
| 1.       | Have to wear sun - glasses ?                  |
| 2.       | Take his ladder to school ?                   |
| 3.       | Put an elephant in a sandwich ?               |
| 4.       | Have a long neck ?                            |
| 5.       | Put that spider in my bed ?                   |
| 6.       | Cross the road ?                              |
| 7.       | Take a shower ?                               |
| 8.       | Go to bed ?                                   |
| 9.       | Become an electrician ?                       |
| 10.      | Wear red - white - and - blue braces ?        |
| 11.      | Take hay to bed ?                             |
| 12.      | Cruel ?                                       |
| 13.      | The difference between a weasel and a stoat ? |
| 14.      | Getting on with your exams ?                  |
| 15.      | Come down a tree ?                            |
| 16.      | Go up tree ?                                  |
| 17.      | If an elephant's been in the fridge ?         |
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| 3.       | Faslin jasqutul matar (lit: (season / class) fall the rain)                               |

Table(11) Examples of the contexts of Arabic question and answer jokes.

| Joke No. | Contexts                                   |
|----------|--|
| 1.       | There are some coins in my soup !          |
| 2.       | I've only got one piece of meat.           |
| 3.       | There's a button in my lettuce !           |
| 4.       | This egg's bad !                           |
| 5.       | There's a fly in my soup.                  |
| 6.       | There's a cockroach in my soup !           |
| 7.       | This soup is terrible ! call the manager ! |
| 8.       | There's a fly in my soup !                 |
| 9.       | You've bought me the wrong order !         |
| 10.      | There's a frog in my soup !                |
| 11.      | I can't stop telling lies !                |
| 12.      | I feel like a piano.                       |
| 13.      | I feel like a bell.                        |
| 14.      | I keep thinking I'm a ten pound note !     |
| 15.      | I keep thinking I'm invisible !            |
| 16.      | I've just swallowed a pencil !             |
| 17.      | I feel like a sheep !                      |
| 18.      | I'm at death's door.                       |
| 19.      | I feel like an apple !                     |
| 20.      | I feel like an electric wire !             |

Table (12) Contexts of English text and rejoinder jokes.

| Joke No. | Contexts   |
|----------|--|
| 1.       | Mawdu:çul ?inša:cil laði: katabtahu çanil qitta bildabti miθlu mawdu: çl ?axi:k<br>(lit: subject (of) the composition which wrote you it about the cat exactly like subject (of) brother your) |
| 2.       | Mudda jadalak jumna: wahlif (lit: extend hand you're the right and swear)  |
| 6.       | Zawgi: juñibul hajawa:nati:gidda: (lit: husband my likes the animals very)   |

Table (13) Examples of the contexts of Arabic text and rejoinder jokes.

| Joke No. | Contexts  |
|----------|---|
| 1.       | The man behind the counter ... you know.                  |
| 2.       | First he asked a zebra ... the lion and said.             |
| 3.       | There was a terrible storm raging ... I shall ride him.   |
| 4.       | It had an open cockpit ... a word out of you.             |
| 5.       | Arriving at a small village ... no trouble at all.        |
| 6.       | Above the wishing - well ... and walked on.               |
| 7.       | Noone aboard had a parachute ... as he jumped he said.    |
| 8.       | There was nothing to eat ... angrily of the Irishman.     |
| 9.       | They decided that ... the paratroopers landed.            |
| 10.      | At last one of them ... two suns;                         |
| 11.      | In describing some of his exciting ... on the front row,  |
| 12.      | One day his servant gave ... your medicine.               |
| 13.      | Senate lady ... and you, madam ?                          |
| 14.      | A gentleman who was passing ... answered quickly,         |
| 15.      | The man says ... to this the woman replies,               |
| 16.      | He asks him ... your neck.                                |
| 17.      | What are you doing have ... the first one.                |
| 18.      | He stops people ... of the meat storage ?                 |
| 19.      | An exasperated young second ... that true ?               |
| 20.      | At the end of his visit ... the official starts to shout: |

Table (14) Contexts of English narrative jokes.

| Joke No. | Contexts  |
|----------|---|
| 6.       | Fara?ahu ragulun waqa:la lahu kajfa taqra?al maggalla: ti wa ?anta ?acma; faradda çalajhil ?acma: qa:?ila:<br>(lit: and saw him man and told him: how read (you) the magazines and you blind? And replied to him the blind saying)  |
| 7.       | Wa dahasat sajjja: ratun musicatun šaxsan faqa: lal ?aç ragu lil?açma: xud raqma ssajja: rati faradda çalajhil ?açma:<br>(lit: and ran car fast over person so told the lame to the blind take number (of) the car. And replied to him the blind)   |
| 20.      | Wabaçdo çan sana ça lahu taqmal ?asna:ni qa:la lahu ttabi:b ?açtaqid hassa tigdar ta: kul kulsi:<br>faradda çalajhi õõari: fu qa: ?ila:<br>(lit: and after made (he) for him denture told him the doctor: think (I) now can (you) eat everything. And replied to him the humorist saying) |

Table (15) Examples of the contexts of Arabic narrative jokes.

| Joke No. | Punchlines  |
|----------|---|
| 1.       | But scored on the <u>action replay</u> ?                    |
| 2.       | His <u>pupils</u> ?   |
| 3.       | So he could learn <u>shorthand</u> ?                        |
| 4.       | So he could wear <u>sleeveless</u> sweaters ?               |
| 5.       | And pleaded for mercy on the grounds he was <u>orphan</u> ? |
| 6.       | Because he wanted to be a <u>mash hit on Broadway</u> ?     |
| 7.       | So he could learn piano by <u>ear</u> ?                     |
| 8.       | Studying for his <u>blood test</u> ?                        |
| 9.       | So he could tell how long he had <u>slept</u> ?             |
| 10.      | So he could not <u>sleepwalk</u> ?                          |
| 11.      | You wouldn't <u>see through it</u> .                        |
| 12.      | For a coat of <u>paint</u> .                                |
| 13.      | For the <u>dead of night</u> .                              |
| 14.      | <u>All green and crinkly</u> .                              |
| 15.      | <u>One - track and dirty</u> .                              |
| 16.      | If she's not upright she's <u>grand</u> .                   |
| 17.      | To shave <u>himeself</u> .                                  |
| 18.      | In case her head <u>falls off</u> .                         |
| 19.      | To save <u>shoeleather</u> .                                |
| 20.      | But if he treats it, it'll go away <u>in a week</u> .       |

Table (16) Punchlines of English one liners.

| Joke No. | Punchlines  |
|----------|---|
| 2.       | Wit <u>cajian bi: ha:</u> (lit: and was appointed in it)        |
| 4.       | Lisaq <u>çali: ha: tawa:big</u> (lit: posted (he) on it stamps) |
| 6.       | Tila? <u>Gila:jid</u> (lit: came out (he) necklaces)            |

Table (17) Examples of the Punchlines of Arabic one liners.

| Joke No. | Punchlines  |
|----------|---|
| 1.       | Because his pupils were so bright.  |
| 2.       | Cos he wanted to go to <u>High School</u> .   |
| 3.       | Cos it's too heavy to <u>lift</u> .   |
| 4.       | Cos he can't stand the smell of <u>his feet</u> .   |
| 5.       | Cos I couldn't find a <u>frog</u> .   |
| 6.       | Cos it was the <u>chicken's day off</u> .   |
| 7.       | He wanted to make a clean <u>getaway</u> .  |
| 8.       | Because the bed won't come to <u>them</u> .   |
| 9.       | He was looking for a bit of <u>light relief</u> .   |
| 10.      | To keep his trousers <u>up</u> .  |
| 11.      | To feed his <u>nightmares</u> .   |
| 12.      | Because he pulls the corn by <u>its ear</u> .   |
| 13.      | Well, the <u>weasel's weasily identified</u> and the <u>stoat's stoatally different</u> . |
| 14.      | Not bad. The questions are easy enough-it's the answer I have <u>difficulty</u> with.     |
| 15.      | It stands on a leaf and waits for <u>autumn</u> .   |
| 16.      | It stands on a corn and waits for it to <u>grow</u> .                                     |
| 17.      | Cos there'll be <u>giant footprints</u> in the <u>butter</u> .                            |
| 18.      | By eating the <u>sand</u> - which is there.   |
| 19.      | Start from <u>scratch</u> .   |
| 20.      | Tickle his middle and see which end <u>smiles</u> .                                       |

Table (18) Punchlines of English question and answer jokes.

| Joke No. | Punchlines   |
|----------|--|
| 1.       | ?anta <u>majjutun</u> ja: sajjidi: (lit: you dead D sir)                                 |
| 2.       | Likaj ? <u>açrifa biha:l waqta</u> sajjidi:<br>(lit: to know (I) by it the time sir)     |
| 8.       | Fi: l faslil laði: lajsa lahu <u>saqf</u><br>(lit: in the class which never has ceiling) |

Table (19) Example of the Punchlines of Arabic question and answer jokes.

| Joke No. | Punchlines   |
|----------|--|
| 1.       | Well, you said you wanted some <u>change in your meals</u>   |
| 2.       | All right, I'll cut it <u>in two</u> for you.                |
| 3.       | That must be from the <u>salad dressing</u>                  |
| 4.       | Don't blame me. I only <u>tay the table.</u>                 |
| 5.       | That's all right, sir. There's a <u>spider on your roll.</u> |
| 6.       | That's strange – it's usually a <u>flu.</u>                  |
| 7.       | He won't <u>eat it</u> either, sir.                          |
| 8.       | Don't worry, sir, he won't <u>drink much.</u>                |
| 9.       | Well, you did say you wanted something <u>different.</u>     |
| 10.      | Yes, sir. This fly's <u>on holiday.</u>                      |
| 11.      | I don't <u>believe you.</u>                                  |
| 12.      | Wait while I make <u>some notes.</u>                         |
| 13.      | Take these <u>pills and give me a ring.</u>                  |
| 14.      | Well, go shopping – You need the <u>change.</u>              |
| 15.      | Who's <u>that?</u>   |
| 16.      | Sit down and write your <u>name.</u>                         |
| 17.      | That's <u>baaaaaad !</u>                                     |
| 18.      | Don't worry – I'll <u>pull you though.</u>                   |
| 19.      | We must get to the <u>core of this.</u>                      |
| 20.      | How <u>shocking !</u>  |

Table (20) Punchlines of English text and rejoinder jokes.

| Joke No. | Punchlines  |
|----------|---|
| 1.       | Li?anna: quttatuna; wa:hida (lit: because cat our one)  |
| 4.       | ʕafwan sajjidi: ?inni: jasra: wi:<br>(lit: sorry sir I left handed)   |
| 8.       | ?argu ?an taku:ni: tuhibbi: nahu miθlana: juhibbuki<br>(lit: hope (I) that be you (in) love (with) him as loves (he) you) |

Table (21) Example of the Punchlines of Arabic text and rejoinder jokes.

| Joke No. | Punchlines   |
|----------|--|
| 1.       | "At four pounds a cup of coffee' said the gorilla, I am not surprised".  |
| 2.       | "Well, I've not been very well lately".  |
| 3.       | "Oh no, sir", said the innkeeper, 'I wouldn't send a knight out on a dog like this'!   |
| 4.       | "That's right", said the old man. "It wasn't easy. I almost said something back there when my wife fell out".  |
| 5.       | I just killed one flea and all the rest went to the funeral!   |
| 6.       | The Scotsman dropped in a five pence ... and waited for his change.  |
| 7.       | God shave me ! – and landed in a barber's shop.  |
| 8.       | "Well, I wanted to drink my share" he replied reasonably 'but as my third was at the bottom I had to drink through yours to get to it'.                                  |
| 9.       | They heard, emitting from beneath a haystack: six .. seven .. eight.   |
| 10.      | Because it shines at night when it is needed; but the sun shines in the daytime, when nobody wants it.   |
| 11.      | "How did the lion get into your pajamas?"  |
| 12.      | "Oh, that doesn't matter", said the gentleman, I'll eat a piece of blotting-paper to counteract it.  |
| 13.      | What 'kee' are you ? <u>Monkey, donkey or yankee ?</u>   |
| 14.      | Ever since I was a baby.   |
| 15.      | "That's funny, you don't look Jewish".   |
| 16.      | "I tried that too, but then I couldn't breathe.  |
| 17.      | "We have the same taste. Let me join you !".   |
| 18.      | The American asks: What is 'shortage' ? The Russian asks: "What is 'opinion'? 'The Pole asks: 'What is meat'?"<br>The New York taxi – driver asks: 'What is 'excuse me'? |
| 19.      | And do you know who I am ? "No", answer the lady, 'Than God!' says the lieutenant disappearing into the crowd.   |
| 20.      | 'Do you know who I am 'No', is the operator's laconic answer, 'but I know where you are calling from.  |

Table (22) Punchlines of English narrative jokes.

| Joke No. | Punchlines   |
|----------|--|
| 6.       | Çana: la: ?aqra?u ja: sajjid: ?ana: ?atafarrāgu çala: ssuwar.<br>(lit: I not read O sir I look at the pictures)      |
| 9.       | ?asriç warkud wara: ?aha: (lit: hurry and run after it)  |
| 20.      | Daxtu:r tismahli: ?ağarrib ?a:kul ?uğurtak.<br>(lit: doctor do allow (you) me try (not to pay /eating) charge your). |

Table (22) Example of the Punchlines of Arabic narrative jokes.

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Do you know who I am? No, the operator's laconic answer.               |
| 2  | And you know who I am? No, answer the lady, "I am God!"                |
| 3  | The New York taxi-driver asks, "What is 'exotic'?"                     |
| 4  | "What is 'exotic'?" The Pole asks, "What is 'meat'?"                   |
| 5  | The American asks, "What is 'stichage'?" The Russian asks,             |
| 6  | "Whatever you like. Let me give you!"                                  |
| 7  | "Let me give you, but then I couldn't believe."                        |
| 8  | "Let me give you, you don't look Jewish."                              |
| 9  | "How come I was a baby?"   |
| 10 | "Monkey, don't you 'yank'?"  |
| 11 | He thought it was a computer.  |
| 12 | "The man doesn't matter," said the gentleman. "I eat a piece of        |
| 13 | the potato, which nobody wants."                                       |
| 14 | Because it shines at night when it is needed, but the sun shines in    |
| 15 | the day.   |
| 16 | They heard coming from beneath a haystack six seven                    |
| 17 | my hand was at the bottom. I had to drink three glasses to get to      |
| 18 | the bottom. I wanted to drink my share, he replied laconically, but as |
| 19 | he had landed in a bad situation.                                      |
| 20 | The Scotsman stopped in a five pence, and waited for his               |

Table (22) Punchlines of English narrative jokes.