Humour and Self-Expression: Suffering and Resistance in the January 25 Revolution

Anwar Fayez Al Bzour[a], [a]Zarqa University, Jordan, Email: [a]abzour@zu.edu.jo

This paper presents a linguistic study of some humorous texts produced during the eighteen-day revolution of January 25, 2011. Egyptians, exploiting their renowned sense of humour, created various humorous forms to satirize autocratic rule, to expose various aspects of its maladministration such as political and economic corruption, as well as the hard living conditions, and to articulate their revolutionary demands. The aim of this study is to demonstrate this skilful use of humour as a form of resistance and revolution. It examines the revolutionary aspects of their humour. It also attempts to uncover the various functions fulfilled by producing jokes, banners and caricatures. More importantly, this study attempts to apply the Cooperative Principle (CP), and the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), presented by Attardo and Raskin (1991), to examine Arabic humorous texts. This study asserts that using humour to resist autocratic regimes is a form of 'politicotainment', which combined entertainment and political humour that asserts the powerful impact of humour during the revolution. It also highlighted various aspects of these texts through employing the two linguistic tools. It also emphasised the use of humour as a coping mechanism, as well as a corrective means to some desirable change.

Key words: *Humour, January 25 revolution, Politics, SSTH, GTVH.*

1. Introduction

"Bread, freedom and social justice" were three demands summarizing what the Egyptians, who took to streets, were calling for in January 2011. These requests were the slogans of the January 25 revolution; they represented the basic rights of any human being, which the then Egyptian ruling regime ignored. The first item has to do with the low standards of living in Egypt and the increasing level of poverty among them, which was evident in the World Bank's report about Egypt in 2011. The report indicated that about 25% of the population fell below the national poverty line, that was equal to $1.25 per day (World Bank, 2011). The second motto is the freedom absent under Mubarak's adminstration, since the country was much like a police state where one would disappear, be arrested or sentenced to life in prison, for just criticizing the atrocity of the state agencies. The third issue has to do with rampant corruption and nepotism which spread everywhere.

Humour had a remarkable role during the eighteen-day Egyptian revolution in 2011. It was present from the very beginning until Mubarak's resignation on February 11, 2011 after 30 years of autocratic rule. This outstanding appearance of humour brought the epithets *the laughing revolution* and *humour revolution*, since humour was skilfully used to express the people's attitude towards the ruling regime as well as to articulate the revolution's demands. Humour was a silent and peaceful revolutionary means; it was a manifestation of non-violent resistance, which motivated people to overthrow that long-time autocratic regime.

For Egyptians in particular, humour is an inseparable part of their lives. Every aspect of their lives is a target of their humour. This sense of humour was effectively employed during the revolution. Albrecht Classen (2010), for example, pointed out "Most people at one time or another engage in, and engage one another with humour, wit, jokes, comedy, ridicule, and the like, even though each country, language, religion, or society expresses itself somewhat differently, laughs about somewhat different objects, comments, or images" (p. 1). However, humour was used with a revolting flavour, that is, it was created to call for freedom, justice and better living circumstances.

2. Review of literature

Research in humour started with Aristotle and Plato. These two great philosophers attempted to explain why people laugh. Aristotle, for instance, gave a sound explanation of humour. He differentiated two sources of humour: words and events (or verbal and referential humour). Verbal humour related to choices of words and their displacement in a given text, whereas referential humour related the nature of the episode or anecdote narrated (Attardo, 1994). Plato, on the other, explained humour as "a mixed feeling of the soul"(p. 18). It is a mixture of pleasure and pain since we ridiculed the criticized qualities of our friends (Attardo, 1994).

These two simple explanations presented by Aristotle and Plato were not satisfactory to numerous writers and philosophers such as Hobbs, Bergson and Horace. These writers explained humour from different viewpoints. Their writings, along with many other writers such as Freud and Schopenhauer revolved around three main views: Incongruity Theories, Superiority Theories, and Release Theories.

2.1 Linguistic theories of humour

Compared with the philosophical and other explanations of humour, the linguistic account of humour started quite recently. It started in the eighties, when Victor Raskin (1985) proposed the first linguistic theory of humour. His theory was known as the Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH). After reviewing previous explanations, Raskin's theory advocated a new approach to humour. His theory is based on two main conditions: in order for a text to be funny, it should be consistent with two scripts, and these scripts are opposite:

A text can be characterized as a single joke- carrying text if both of the following conditions are satisfied:

a- A text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts.
b- The two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite. The two scripts with which the text is compatible are said to overlap fully or in part in this text.(Raskin 1985,p. 99)

In response to these limitations, Raskin and Attardo (1991) revised the SSTH and presented the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH). The GTVH broadens the scope of the SSTH: it includes five other knowledge resources (KRs) that must be tapped into when generating a joke, in addition to the script opposition from the SSTH. These KRs are: script opposition (SO), logical mechanism (LM), the target (TA), the narrative strategy (NS), the language (LA), and the situation (SI).

These two theories, i.e., the SSTH and the GTVH are the most important linguistic attempts to account for humour. There are other models such as the IDM, Frame –shifting theories, the register theory and others. However, others are very limited in scope while these two theories are universal since they have been applied to English, Russian, Polish, and French data.

It is worth mentioning that humorous data has attracted the attention of many linguists. They have studied humour in conversation, in sitcoms, in political speech, in stand- up comedies, and in newspapers and magazines. Kate Elwood (2000), Raskin (1985), Attardo (1994, 2001, 2005, 2008), Ermida (2008), Ritchie (2004), Ross (1998), for example, examined several

humorous forms. These studies tackled various techniques used to create humour. These techniques included allusion to idioms and quotations, polysemy, homophones and homonyms, literalisation of idioms, pseudo-morphs and lexical and grammatical puns and irony.

However, studying Arabic humour has not attracted the attention of much linguists, despite Arabs being well-known for their sense of humour. The number of linguistic studies of Arabic humour is very few compared with the endless production of humorous texts in the Egyptian context. Few studies examine specific aspects of humour like satire, irony, puns, semantic shifts…etc. To examine the elusive nature of humour, the present study examines humorous texts deployed during the January 25 Revolution. It attempts to highlight the various aspects of these texts. It also examines humour as a powerful tool to express unspeakable suffering.

3. Methods of data collection

The data for this study were created during the eighteen days of demonstrations and sit-ins. Revolutionaries produced various texts that exposed the reasons behind their uprising. These texts were collected from two sources. The first is the social media network Facebook. The second source is a collection of two books published after the revolution. It collected these humorous texts created by protesters. The two books are ثورة التحرير تضحك: عبقرية المصريين *(Tahrir's Revolution is Laughing: Egyptians' Genius* by Samir El-Gamal*) and* نكت ثورة *يناير25"/ Jokes of January 25 revolution).* The texts in question include one text taken from the 6 April Youth Movement page on Facebook, five texts from the first book, and four texts from the second book.

The collected texts were categorized under four headings. The first includes texts that highlight economic corruption. The second comprises texts that expose political corruption. The third contains texts that target suppression and oppression, and the last describes hard living conditions; texts illustrating Egyptians' suffering under Mubarak's regime. The researcher translated these texts into English, yet this task was difficult due to the lingua-cultural specificity. These characteristics were highlighted by the use of many linguistic elements such as rhyme, allusions, parody, or wordplay. Moreover, translating these humorous texts included various contextually-based issues which are hard to explain or transfer in target texts. Thus, the translation of these texts is a problem translation: it is translating various problems the Egyptians faced under Mubarak's regime. Another difficulty in translating these texts is that humour usually involves opposing elements which are hard to reflect in the target language due to the absence of contextual and para-contextual elements, which are often problematic to translate. These elements, which various scholars tackled in their treatment of transferring humorous texts, hinder the existence of the functional

equivalence in the target texts (See Muhaidat, 2005; Chiaro, 2009, 2010; Vandaele, 1999, 2010, Elnamoury, 2012; and, Salem & Taira, 2012).

4. Methods of data analysis

Scholars from different fields studied humour. They introduced various theories such as the incongruity theories, the superiority theories and the release theories. However, the linguistic handling of humour started in the late eighties. Since then various theories and models were proposed to account for humour from the linguistic perspective. They came up with various methodologies to analyse the different forms of humorous texts. They proposed the Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH), Nodal Point Theory, the Isotopy-Disjunction Model (IDM), the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), and other theories such as incongruity based theories.

However, the present study uses two main linguistic theories to analyse the selected data. The first method is the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), proposed by Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo in 1991. The second is the Cooperative Principle (CP) which explores interpersonal communication, and puts forth some rules which govern human's exchanges. These two frameworks are used together for two main reasons. First, the researcher's main aim in this study is to explain the functional uses of humour by the Egyptian revolutionaries during the upheaval, since these two theories include various parameters and maxims that will capture this purpose. Second, they enable the researcher to check the viability of these two theories, for the analysis of these humourous Arabic texts.

4.1 The General Theory of Verbal Humour(GTVH)

Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo presented this theory in 1991 as an extension to the SSTH presented by Raskin in 1985 to account for verbal humour. The present study uses this theory to analyse all the collected texts according to the six parameters of this theory: Script opposition, Logical Mechanism, Target, Situation, Narrative strategies, Language.

4.2 The maxim of quantity

This maxim relates to the quantity of information presented. This maxim has two main sub maxims:
1.   Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange)
2.   Do not make your contribution more informative than is required. (Grice, 1989, p.26)

4.3 The maxim of quality

This maxim has one super maxim and two sub-maxims. The super maxim states that the speaker should "try to make [his/her] contribution one that is true." The two sub-maxims are:

1.   Do not say what you believe to be false.
2.   Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. (Grice, 1975, p. 27).
This maxim stipulates that the speaker should provide true information.

4.4 The maxim of relation

This maxim requires the participants to "be relevant" (Grice, 1975, p. 27) to the topic of their communication, and if any one of them is trying to change the topic he/she should inform the other participant.

4.5 The maxim of manner

 This category describes the 'how-part' of the talk. It is not related to the content of what is being said but to how it is said. This category includes the super maxim- "Be Perspicuous"- and four sub- maxims:
a.   Avoid obscurity
b.   Avoid ambiguity
c.   Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
d.   Be orderly. (Grice, 1975, p. 27)

These four maxims govern any communicative, purposeful exchange between speakers. However, any breaking of these maxims, on the part of one participant, means one of the following conditions that Grice presented: violation, opting out, maxim clash or flouting. The latter denotes that the speakers is transgressing the maxim to transfer an implicit message to the listener; it gives rise to conversation implicature.

5. The analysis

The texts in this study include different texts. Some target corruption, either economic or political. Others demonstrate the suppression and the oppression the Egyptians were suffering, as well as the hard living conditions they experienced under Mubarak's administration.

5.1 Economic corruption

Various humorous texts were created to highlight the regime's economic corruption from which Egyptians suffered intensely. Through using these humorous texts, protesters criticized the favouritism and nepotism which spread due to the officials' jobbery and profiteering. For example, in the following joke, protesters criticized the widespread corruption of the regime's officials. Here, the president's sons were using the trick of opening small shops in the north and the south of the country to seize the whole country by merging their two shops:

الرئيس صحي من النوم على مظاهرة كبيرة من أهل اسكندرية، سألهم: "في إيه؟"، ردوا عليه: "علاء بيه أخد حته أرض متر في متر بوضع اليد في اسكندرية". رد حسني: "بقي جات على الواد الحيلة، سيبوه يبني مستقبله، الواد عايز يفتح محل وبعدين دي أرض متر في متر". الناس مشيت بعد أما الرئيس رضاهم. تاني يوم الرئيس صحي على مظاهرة تانية من أهل أسوان، سألهم: "في إيه؟". ردوا عليه: "جمال بيه أخذ حته أرض متر في متر في أسوان". رد عليهم حسني زي ما رد على بتوع اسكندرية. الناس روحت بعد أما الرئيس رضاهم. تالت يوم صحي على مظاهرة من مصر كلها. سأل: "فيه إيه؟، مش إحنا خلصنا من موضوع المحالات بتاعت الولاد". ردوا الناس: "المشكلة يا ريس إن الاثنين عايزين يفتحوا المحلات على بعض".

(El-Habib, 2011, p. 16)

(The president got up on a massive demonstration in Alexandria. "What is going on?" he asked. "Mr. President, your son Alaa seized a small plot of land approximately 1 square meter in Alexandria," he was told. "Oh! Let my little dear son secure his future life; he wants to open a shop, and the size of the land is very small," he said trying to calm the angry protesters who walked away after his speech. Next day, he was awakened on the news of another demonstration in Aswan. "What is the matter?" he asked in surprise. They told him that his son Gamal appropriated a piece of land in Aswan. He also pacified the people as he did with those in Alexandria, and the people dispersed. On the third day, there were massive demonstrations all over the country, the president asked, "What is going on?" asked the president. "Did we not finish the problems of my sons' shops?" he wondered. "The problem is that the two brothers want to merge their two shops," the people explained.)

SO: opening shops and connecting two opposite ends in the country Vs. appropriating the whole country
LM: garden-path
SI: president's sons open shops
TA: regime's corruption and favouritism
NS: narrative including a dialogue
LA: sarcasm & allusion

The situation in this joke is that the president's sons started their own business by opening small shops in Alexandria and Aswan. This activates the script of hard-working persons who

did not depend upon their father's position. This script is also enhanced by the president's justifications for his sons' actions to assuage the angry citizens. However, the final punchline, "they want to merge the two shops", is incompatible with this ongoing script. This punchline demonstrates the malicious intentions of the president's sons who were planning to take over the whole country through their wicked idea of merging their two shops, which activates the script of nepotism and avarice.

The two scripts that the text activates are partially opposed. This partial opposition is justified through the 'garden path' logical mechanism, since in the first situation the president's words trigger the idea that the president's sons are hard-working persons. However, after reading the punchline, our first thought proves to be false since they were planning to seize the whole country. Therefore, one has to backtrack to review and re-interpret the initially activated script in terms of our world knowledge about this regime.

The target in this joke is Mubarak and his regime. Here, this text targets the corruption and nepotism. He is presented justifying his sons' illegal seizure of land instead of punishing them or holding them back from such illegal acts. Trying to assuage the angry people, he presents meaningless excuses for his sons' crooked plans, through alleging that their intentions are merely to open a small business to earn a living.

The humour in this text is also highlighted by the use of a sarcastic tone. Here, the country's resources are alluded to as shops. This ridiculed the officials' avarice whose main goal was to control the whole country. The sarcastic tone is also evident in Mubarak's justification. Here, Mubarak is presented defending illegal acts done by his two sons. In addition, this sarcastic tone and allusive aspects of the text bring about a flouting of the cooperative principle's maxims. Here, the quality maxim is flouted in presenting the president's son trying to run small shops. It is also flouted in their attempt to merge their two shops. However, the flouting of the quality maxim evokes conversational implicatures: they expose the regime's corruption; and, they ridicule officials' hypocrisy.

5.2 Political corruption

This section handles another example of suffering. It highlights the political corruption in the country. Texts in this section underline instances of corrupt political environment under Mubarak's administration. For example, officials in the National Democratic Party (NDP) controlled everything in the country. They cared mainly for their interests and benefits. This led to various dissatisfactory aspects such as the spread of corruption, nepotism and oppression that increased the suffering of the people. The following text, for example, unmasks the false appearance of this party and strips it down to its real ugly face:

(The National Democratic Party (NDP) is not a place for making policies but a place for making sandwiches)

(https://www.facebook.com/6April Youth Movement)

SO: the opposition is between what is actual vs. what is non-actual: politics vs. food:

Policy vs. sandwiches
LM: false analogy
TA: the regime's officials
SI: the NDP is a restaurant serving sandwiches
NS: advertisement
LA: rhythm, sarcasm, and allusion

The humour in this text results from numerous resources: the script oppositions, the logical mechanism, the target, the situation, and linguistic elements, as well as the flouting of the cooperative principle. The opposition is between what is actual and what is non-actual. The mentioning of the NDP triggers the script of the political party, its officials and their policies. However, the second part of the statement triggers another script which shifts our line of thought about politics to the regime's sandwiches. Here, the world information illustrates that the NDP was the ruling party under Mubarak's administration, and it was responsible for making the country's policy. Nevertheless, the text presents the NDP as a place for making sandwiches, which creates a partial opposition between these two activated scripts.

This partial opposition between these two activated scripts is resolved through the use of the false analogy logical mechanism. The NDP is depicted here as a place for corruption and inefficiency. It is presented as a political party that does not care about making policy for the sake of the country, but it is presented as a place for making profits for its favoured members through protecting their corruption.

The choice of the NDP as a target for this text is very effective. This text makes fun of the NDP, which controlled and determined the country's policies that instead of lessening the

people's suffering aggravated their miserable conditions. This regime comprises a handful of corrupt businesspersons who were self-interested and cared only for their shares of the country's resources.

Moreover, the humour in this text is reinforced by alluding to the advertising register of a famous sandwich shop, "Mo'men", a local sandwich shop whose advertisement uses this formula: "MO'men is a shop for sandwiches". Here, this text used the logo of these shops as well as its linguistic formula to allude to the regime's avarice.

Finally, the flouting of the CP in this text is instrumental in the resulting humour. Here, the flouting of the quality maxim implies that the NDP is not a political party that attempts to improve the Egyptian country but it is a place for making money.

Similarly, the following text exposes the corruption within the NDP. Here, the regime's official is defending the political diversity in the party; he is trying to convince his interviewee that his party is representative of the whole country:

(An NDP's official tells a TV reporter, "Within the NDP, We have tall persons and short persons; thin and fat ones; and, one with a moustache and another without. This indicates the diverse political formation of the party".)
(El-Gamal, 2011, p. 250)
SO: different physical appearances vs. political diversity
LM: reasoning from false premises
SI: describing the variation within the NDP
TA: NDP
NS: an interview
LA: wordplay& sarcasm

The situation in this example is that of an NDP official affirming that his political party represents a model of multiplicity of people, by including various physical appearances. This statement activates the script of individual differences in physical appearances since there are tall and short men, fat and thin ones…etc. However, the final statement is incompatible with this activated script since it is related to the ideological or political variation script. The activation of the latter script is realized by the use of the semantic shift trigger "political diversity". This wordplay enhances the resulting juxtaposition of the two activated scripts that are in partial opposition.

This partial opposition is realized by the difference between two types of variation: physical and ideological variation. The first has to do with characters while the second is related to politics. However, this opposition is justified by the logical mechanism of faulty reasoning from false premises, since the official argues that the existence of physical differences is an evidence of the political variation.

The target of this joke is the official who interpreted and restricted the field of variation within the party, to physical differences. This interpretation shows a lack of common sense which refers to the increasing political corruption under the regime's administration. Finally, in this joke, there is a flouting of the relation maxim, since the official used physical differences to indicate the existence of ideological multiplicity. However, this flouting implicitly indicates the spread of corruption and inefficiency under Mubarak's administration.

5.3 Hard living conditions

The widespread corruption and rampant nepotism as well as Mubarak's bad management were all elements which led to disastrous living conditions for the Egyptians. Ahmed Ali (2012), an Egyptian writer, skilfully demonstrated the impact of the Mubarak regime's policies upon the country's state, as well as the citizens' in different fields as follows:

Egypt was staggering under the economic policies that were designed to make the rich richer, the poor poorer and the corrupt more corrupt; under social conditions that made the depressed more depressed; under a state of moral degradation that made the talk of adhering to traditional as well as religious moral values no more than detachment from reality. (p. 1)
The impact of the regime's administration and the adopted policies upon the Egyptians made them frustrated because of the spread of corruption, ignorance, negligence, bribery and fraud. To remind the people of this regime's destructive policies, revolutionaries in Egypt's various squares coined up numerous texts to highlight the corruption of that regime and to expose officials' corruption. They used various humorous texts to refer to their suffering and living conditions.

For example, in the following texts, the Egyptian citizen who can live on 200 pound per month is viewed as one of the Seven Wonders of the world:

1.
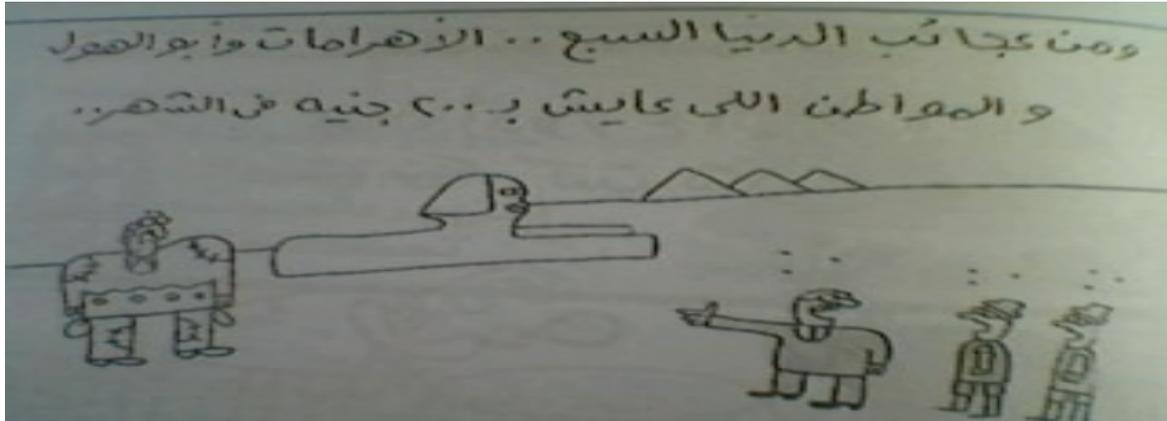
(El-Gamal, 2011, p. 183)

(The Seven Wonders of the world include the pyramids, sphinx, and the Egyptian citizen who is able to survive with only 200 pound per month," a tourist guide told tourists.)

SO: real vs. unreal: World Seven Wonders vs. Egyptian citizen's income
LM: false analogy
SI: a tourist guide tells the tourists about the Seven Wonders of the World
TA: the regime policies
NS: statement
LA: parallelism & sarcasm

The situation in this caricature is that of a tourist guide telling tourists about the Seven Wonders of the World. This activates the script of ancient, wonderful monuments. The mentioning of the pyramids and Sphinx enhances this script. However, the last item he mentioned was the citizen who could live on 200 pound a month. This item is incompatible with the previously activated script because our world knowledge interprets this item as irrelevant to the script of the Seven Wonders. It activates another script which is related to the script of the Egyptian citizen's suffering, whose living condition is considered one of the world's greatest mysteries.

These two activated scripts are completely opposed and partially overlapping. Their complete, local antonym lies in the mention of pyramids and sphinx as World Wonders along with the Egyptian citizen who is not. However, the partial overlapping of the two employed scripts is realized through the fact that these three items defy the rule of existence: the first

two items defy time while the third item defies explanation and description since living on such a small amount of money is an enigma. This partial overlapping is also realized by the use of the logical mechanism of false analogy, since the third item is presented as a thing which triggers our astonishment and curiosity as the other two items did.

The target in this text is the regime's policies. Here, the regime policy grouped the Egyptian citizen among the World's Seven Wonders, and his miserable life – as well as, perhaps, to the tourists - to be among the world biggest mysteries. Finally, there is a flouting of the quality maxim. In this text, the tourist guide provides information which is untrue. Here, the Egyptian citizen is introduced as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. This flouting implies an implicit criticism of the ruling regime which did not care for citizens "living conditions, when they were leading hard lives.

Similarly, the following text illustrates the people's suffering because of the government's policies and its exploitation of the poor citizens:

A remarkable humorous text that ridicules that regime's polices is the following text. Here, the regime is presented as increasing the people's suffering instead of seeking to alleviate it:
   2.

قاله: "الشعب بيأكل زفت". قاله: "غلى الزفت"..مبارك قال لعمر سليمان: "أيه أخبار الشعب بعد الغلاء؟"

(El-Gamal, 2011, p. 194)

("What did the people do after we raised the prices?" Mubarak asked Omar Suleiman. "The people are eating tar," Suleiman said. "Increase the price of the tar," ordered the president.)
SO: real vs. unreal; idiomatic vs. literal interpretation; eating tar vs. increasing its price; and, alleviating suffering vs. increasing it

LM: ignoring the obvious & contradiction
SI: Mubarak asks Suleiman about the people's living conditions
TA: the regime's polices

NS: dialogue
LA: idiomatic meaning and ambiguity, literalisation of the idiom.

In this situation, Mubarak asked Suleiman about the people's living conditions after the prices went up. This activates the script of a president who seeks to alleviate his people's suffering. However, Mubarak's order to increase the prices was incompatible with his initial question. His latter order activates an opposing script wherein Mubarak is presented as seeking to aggravate the Egyptians' suffering. Regardless of the meaning of Suleiman's response, Mubarak asks him to increase the price of tar to which the Egyptians have turned for sustenance after prices went up.

The opposition between these activated scripts is justified through the logical mechanism of ignoring the obvious, and the resulting contradiction between being responsible for alleviating the people's suffering and seeking to increase it. Here, Mubarak ignores the denotation of the idiomatic expression "eating tar" and takes it literally. He used the word tar in the script of eating and asked to increase its price.

The targets in this example are the regime's officials and the president. During his administration, inflation was increasing, the people were suffering, and the regime was increasing the people's bad living conditions. Therefore, this joke presented the regime as unwilling as well as uninterested in assuaging the people's suffering.

Furthermore, the use of sarcastic tone also enhances the resulting humour. Here, Mubarak is presented as a president who lacks the required linguistic competence to differentiate between the literal meaning and an idiomatic one. He cannot identify the idiomatic expression which Suleiman used to express the suffering of the people. Thus, Suleiman's answer pushed the president to mistake tar as one of the edible items although our world knowledge indicates that human beings cannot eat tar.

Moreover, this idiomatic expression provided by Suleiman is a flout of the quality as well as the manner maxims. The flouting of the manner maxim is evident in Suleiman's answer which provided an ambiguous answer that was misunderstood by Mubarak. He also flouts the quality maxim since tar is not eatable. The flouting of these two maxims gives rise to the implicature that Mubarak was not an efficient ruler, since he did not care about his people or their suffering.

6. Conclusion

This study exposes various reasons for the people's suffering. It highlights four aspects of the maladministration of the ruling regime which increased the people's hard living conditions.

Firstly, it underlines the spread of the economic corruption which enabled the regime's officials to exploit the poor citizens. Secondly, it highlights the political corruption, which exposes the autocratic reign disguised as a democratic one believing in diversity and election. Thirdly, it demonstrates another means of controlling Egyptians through intimidating them. Finally, it exposes the regime's policies in aggravating the people's suffering instead of securing them better living conditions.

The texts in this study employed various elements and mechanisms to convey the Egyptians' suffering. They employed different types of opposition and overlapping. They also used different logical mechanism to justify this opposition. The situations revealed the different aspects of their suffering: economic corruption, political corruption, suppression and oppression, and hard living conditions. The linguistics devices in these texts depended mainly on employing the sarcastic tones along with word play.

In addition, the texted-in question flouted the Cooperative Principle. This flouting gave rise to various conversational, and in some cases conventional, implicatures, which revealed the people's attitude towards Mubarak and his regime.

Moreover, the evident existence of the referential humour affects the script distribution within these texts. Scripts activated in these texts were asymmetrically distributed due to the lack of proportion between the Foreground Script (FS) and the Background Script (BS). The first is activated by the existence or the establishment of an opposing meaning to the one previously evoked via the existence of the BS. The background script usually sets the stage for the FS (AmadeuViana, 2010, p.508). The distribution of FSs and BSs is not equal in the section. It is also noteworthy that numerous texts present only the foreground information that the model reader will automatically contrast with his linguistic as well as world knowledge. This use of the inferential scripts presented a challenging task in the analysis, as well as the appreciation stages, since readers would not get the implied meanings without being aware of the BSs. This employment of inferential scripts made it easier for them to safely convey many messages about the ruling regime. However, this made the appreciation process by any reader a challenging one.

Finally, the texts in this section highlight an important aspect concerning the hierarchical nature proposed by Attardo and Raskin of the knowledge resources. They argued that these KRs followed a specific order in the process of humour invoking: SO, LM, SI, TA, NS, and LA. However, one noticed that the TA parameter occupies the highest position in these texts. This parameter determined the employed opposed scripts that will define the employed LM, SI, NS, as well as the LA parameters. The following diagram shows the difference between Raskin and Attardo's (1991) hierarchy of KRs in their GTVH and the one that these texts demonstrated during the analysis process:

Figure 1. Attardo and Raskin's hierarchical order of the KRs in the invoking of humour—carrying text.

Figure 2. The hierarchical order that the analysed texts revealed

The higher position that is occupied by the LA KR is compatible with the aim of these texts. These texts were all created either to ridicule the present or to expose his bad administration. Therefore, the choice of the LA will demonstrate that there was a change in the order of the content KRS, in opposition to stability in the order of the tool KRs. Moreover, the tool resources is reduced to minimum significance in these texts, since the use of the referential humour underlines the importance and the role played by the content KRs more than that of tool KRs in the process of creating the humorous texts.

REFERENCES

Abdelgayyed, S. (2012). *A linguistic study of verbal humor in selected episodes from the situation comedy Friends* (Unpublished master's thesis*).*Cairo University, Cairo.

Ali .A.(2012, March 26-28).*Humor, translation and revolutionary slogans*: The Egyptian *model* . Paper presented at BRISMES annual conference. Retrieved fromhttp://ebookbrowse.com/ahmed-ali-humour-translation-and-revolutionary-slogans-pdf-d334797169.

Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter .

Attardo, S. (1997). The semantic foundations of cognitive theories of humor. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research, 10*(4), 395-420.

Attardo, S. (2001). *Humorous texts: A semantic and pragmatic analysis.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter .

Attardo, S. (2005).The handbook of pragmatics. *Humor*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Attado, S. (2008). Semantics and pragmatics of humor. *Language and Linguistic Compass, 10* (1111), 1203-1215.

Attardo, S. (2009). A commentary on Antonopoulou and Nikiforidou. In J. Vandaele& G. Broˆne (Eds). *Cognitive Poetics:Goals, Gains and Gaps* (pp. 315-317). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Attardo, S. (2011). Humor. In J. Zienkowski, J. Östman, & J. and Verschueren, *Discursive pragmatics* (pp. 135-155). Amsterdam /Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Attardo, S., & Raskin, V. (1991). Script theory revis(it)ed: Joke similarity and joke representation model. *Humor, 4 (4)*, 293-347.

Chiaro, D. (2009). Cultural divide or unifying factor? Humorous talk in the interaction of bilingual, cross-cultural couples. In N. Norrick, & D. Chairo, *Humor in interaction* (pp. 211-231). Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Chairo, D. (2010). Translating humor in the media. In Delia Chairo, *Translation, humor and the media: translation and humor* (pp. 1-16). London: Continuum Internatinal Publishing Group.

Classen, A. (2010). *Laughter in the Middle Ages and early modern times: Epistomology of a fundamental human behavior, its meaning, and consequences.* New York: De Gruyter.

Dornerus. (2005). *Breaking maxims in conversation: A comparative study of how scriptwriters break maxims in Desperate Housewives and That 70's Show*. Karlstad: Karlstad Universitet. Retrieved from // http:kau.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:5829/FULLTEXT01

El-Gamal, S. (2011). *θawerat ?l-tahrir tađhak: ʕabqariyat ?l-maṣriyi:n* [Tahrir's revolution is laughing: Egyptians' genius]. Cairo: Dar Elgomhereya Press.

El-Habib, T. *(2011). nukat θawirit xamiSah wi ʕiʃri:nyana:yir*[*Jokes of January 25ᵗʰ revolution]*. (2011). Retrieved from http://hulkload.com/ce2fpna8jble

Elnamoury, M. (2012, November 16*). When is revolution untranslatable? When it's fast and funny.* Retrievedfrom wordpress: http://arablit.wordpress.com/2012/11/16/when-is-revolution-untranslatable-when-its-fast-and-funny

Ermida, I. (2008). *The langauge of comic narrative: Humor construction in short stories.* Berlin: Mounton de Gruyter.

Grice, P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In Cole, P., Morgan, J. *Speech acts* (pp.41-58). New York: Academia Press.

Grice, P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. London: Harvard University Press.

Kate, W. (2007) *Ad Laughs: An analysis of humour in U S magazine advertisement*. Retrieved March 5, 2010, from http://www.waseda.jp/wcom/images/ second/ bun31_01.pdf

Muhaidat, F. (2005). *A tale of two cities in Arabic translation*. New York:

    Universal Publisher.

Raskin, V. (1985). *Semantic mechanism of humor.* Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Ritchie, G. (2004).*Linguistic analysis of jokes*. London: Rout ledge.

Ross, A. (1998). *The language of humor*. London: Routledge.

Sala, M. (2000). *Humor, nonsense, and absurd: the linguistic analysis of non-serious narratives (*Master's thesis). Retrieved from http//: www.unibg.it/dati/persone/1206/3638.pdf

Salem, H., & Taira, K. (2012). Al-Thawra al-daHika: The Challenges of translating revolutionary humor. In Samia Mehrez, *Translating Egypt's revolution: The language of Tahrir* (pp. 183-211). Cairo: The American University Press.

Vandaele, J. (1999). Each time we laugh: Translated humour in screen comedy. *Translation and the (Re)Location of Meaning* , 237-272.

Vandaele, J. (2010). Humor in translation. In Y. G. Doorslaer, *Handbook of translation studies* (pp. 147-152). Amsterdam & phladelphia: John Benjamins.

Viana, A. (2010). Asymmetry in script opposition. *Humor, 23*(4), 505- 526. doi:10.1515/HUMR.2010.023

World Bank) .2013 .(*Egypt Overview*.Retrievedfrom http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/overview