



Exploring Conceptual Metaphors in American and Egyptian Jokes During the Coronavirus Pandemic: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study examines the differences between Egyptian and American jokes about the coronavirus and quarantine time during the 2020 pandemic. It uses the Semantic Script theory and Conceptual Metaphor theory to analyze the conceptual metaphors used in both cultures. The study focuses on the types of metaphors employed, script violations, humor techniques, cultural factors affecting perception, and shared fears and challenges. Moreover, it attempts to answer the following questions; (1) What are the types of conceptual metaphors that are employed in Egyptian and American jokes? and how far do these conceptual metaphors in Egyptian and American jokes reflect cultural differences? (2) What types of script violations are commonly exploited in Egyptian and American jokes to evoke laughter? and how far are the humor techniques used by both Americans and Egyptians in their jokes different or similar? (3) How do cultural factors affect the perception and understanding of jokes in both Egyptian and American societies? (4) How far do both Egyptian and American jokes reflect the same fears and challenges of enduring a pandemic? To conduct this study a corpus of 32 Egyptian and American jokes was collected and, analysed using semantic script theory, conceptual metaphors, cultural references, and wordplay techniques. Findings show that both humor in Egyptian and American jokes arises from the violation of expectations or norms, drawing on different source domains. American humor often uses societal norms and shared experiences, while Egyptian jokes primarily focus on cultural references and social and historical issues.

Keywords: American jokes, conceptual metaphor, coronavirus pandemic, comparative study, Egyptian jokes, Semantic-script theory, lockdown jokes, COVID-19 pandemic jokes

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1. Introduction

Humor is a socio-cultural phenomenon that is commonly used by all humans. This is what (Zabalbeascoa, 2008) asserts as he maintains that humor has two main characteristics: it is a social phenomenon and it is also culture-related. Moreover, it is a universal aspect that is shared by all human cultures of different languages and various societies. It is essential in human communication, in the sense that it conveys social dynamics, cultural values and beliefs. Furthermore, it is used to spot and comprehend cultural similarities and differences. Many people consider humor as an essential phenomenon that is used to overcome difficult times. They regard it as a relief tool to reduce anxiety and worry, especially when the future seems insecure. This was manifested during 2020, when many people all over the world started to make humorous jokes to reduce the stress and fear of the pandemic and to overcome the feeling of boredom during the lockdown. As a result, many funny jokes about the quarantine, pandemic, lockdown, and virus jokes were launched on social media. As a social phenomenon, the current study examines several Egyptian and American jokes in order to explain how they reflect both societies. As a culturally-related phenomenon, the study investigates how these jokes are culturally-related to the Egyptian and American culture.

According to Attardo (2020), the word “humor” emerges as a technical term that covers anything that is regarded as funny, amusing, or laughable. Attardo (1994) divides humor into two types; referential and verbal. The latter type ‘verbal humor’ is the main concern of the present study as it focuses on ‘jokes’ which is an example of verbal humor (1994, pp.26-29). According to the Semantic Script Theory, the two types are indistinguishable, because the two share the same mechanisms (1994, p. 220). However, in the present study, since jokes belong to the genre of humorous discourse, the term ‘verbal humor’ will be used to refer to the jokes in this study.

According to Kuipers (2008), the joke is “socially and culturally shaped, and often quite particular to a specific time and place” (p. 1). As for the structure of a joke, it is made up of two main parts: the set-up (sometimes referred to as build-up) and the punch-line (Dyner, 2009). The set-up part is usually a narrative and/or a dialogue, whereas the punch-line is the last part of the joke (ibid). Moreover, three basic types of jokes are mentioned by Schmitz (2002). They are universal, cultural and linguistic ones. Universal jokes, on the one hand, indicate humorous utterances which are defined by the utterance context, cultural jokes, on the other hand, rely on shared cultural knowledge in order to be understood and appreciated. The last type is linguistic jokes are based on the linguistic aspects of the utterance including morphology, phonology or syntax of certain languages. Taking Egyptian and American jokes as examples, it is to be noted that any differences between these two sets of jokes may be influenced by cultural or social, or linguistic factors. Therefore, the current study aims to examine some Egyptian and American jokes in an attempt to find out the differences between the two cultures during the traumatic year of the coronavirus pandemic which the whole world had been through.

Joking is defined by Freud (1905) as “the ability to find similarity between dissimilar things – that is, hidden similarities” (1905, p.1617). Another definition of a joke which seems to be more or less the same idea is that it is “a contrast of ideas’, ‘sense in nonsense’, ‘bewilderment and illumination’ (ibid). Definitions that bring to mind the idea of contrasting ideas, which can be related to metaphor which is also based on duality. Thus, metaphor can be a source of a joke. Both jokes and metaphors draw an analogy or a relation between contrasting ideas or words and this leads to the humor. Drawing the analogy between jokes and metaphors is important to this study since one of the objectives of the study is to investigate the conceptual metaphors found in the jokes under question. This in turn helps in explaining how metaphors contribute to humor by producing unexpected associations and highlighting conceptual contrasts.

Egyptians are known for their innate lightheartedness and witty sense of humor. They always resort to humor and jokes to overcome their social and economic problems. Even during coronavirus pandemic, they created many jokes which mock coronavirus and their status during the lockdown. These jokes reflect their

ability to reduce and overcome the consequences of coronavirus through laughter. Accordingly, the researcher collects sixteen Egyptian jokes that were spread during the crisis on the social media to show Egyptians' sense of humor and to highlight how these jokes reflect the Egyptian society and culture. Similarly, Americans also had this sense of humor due to many factors. One of these factors maybe the result of America's enormous cultural diversity as people, there, come from different cultures to live in America. Therefore, this blending of cultures exposes Americans to different ideas and human behaviors that other countries may not have. This could help to explain why Americans do have this sense of humor. Therefore, this study attempts to compare between Egyptian and American humor, through jokes about coronavirus in order to spot the similarities and differences between the two cultures during the pandemic.

2. Aim of the Study

By examining the jokes under question, this study aims to examine the cultural differences between Egyptians and Americans during the coronavirus pandemic through the use of conceptual metaphors in their jokes. In addition, it focuses on the similarities and differences between the two societies through the shared experiences found in the jokes. Furthermore, it attempts to show the different factors employed in the collected data that help in creating the humor in these jokes.

3. Research Questions

The present study aims to find answers to the following questions:

- 1- What are the conceptual metaphors employed in Egyptian and American jokes? and how far do these conceptual metaphors in Egyptian and American jokes reflect cultural differences?
- 2- What types of script violations are commonly exploited in Egyptian and American jokes to evoke laughter? and how far are the humor techniques used by both Americans and Egyptians in their jokes different or similar?
- 3- How do cultural factors affect the perception and understanding of jokes in both Egyptian and American societies?

- 4- How far do both Egyptian and American jokes reflect the same fears and challenges of enduring a pandemic?

4. Methodology and Data Collection

For carrying out a comprehensive analysis of jokes, a combined framework is adopted. The jokes are analyzed in terms of both the Semantic-Script theory (SSTH) and Conceptual Metaphor theory (CM). The study utilizes two research methodologies: descriptive and comparative methods. The data of the study consist of (16) Coronavirus American jokes and (16) Coronavirus Egyptian jokes. The Egyptian jokes are translated, and then analyzed. The jokes under investigation were spread on Facebook during the lockdown, and were collected from different sources. As for the Egyptian jokes, they are taken from an article published on Al-Ahram newspaper, on Saturday, 6th of June 2020, written by Sanaa El-Beisy, while the American jokes are taken from a newsletter retrieved from <https://www.fatherly.com/entertainment/best-coronavirus-jokes>.

By conducting a comparative analysis of American and Egyptian jokes using these theoretical frameworks, this research aims to shed light on the cultural differences and similarities in humor. It seeks to deepen our understanding of how conceptual metaphors, incompatibilities, and cultural factors contribute to the creation and reception of jokes in these two distinct cultural contexts. Ultimately, this study reflects cultural values, beliefs and social dynamics in the two cultures through the description of the jokes under examination.

5. Review of Literature

This section is divided into three parts. Major social-psychological theories of humor, such as the theories of superiority, relief and incongruity theories are covered. In addition, linguistics theories of humor such as the semantic-script theory of humor, the general theory of verbal humor and the audience-based theory of humor are also reviewed. The second part of this section covers a variety of humor-related research topics that are connected to the theme of the present study. The uses of humor in society and its social function. Moreover, the third

part is a review on the previous studies that dealt with humor and jokes in relation to Egyptian society as well as the American society.

Humor is widely examined by many scholars from a variety of perspectives in an attempt to gain a full understanding of its nature and effects. Psychological, linguistic, semiotic, sociocultural, and other are some of these perspectives. Psychologically, humor is examined in terms of the cognitive processes involved in recognizing and appreciating humor, or the emotional experience of humor, or the social functions of humor (Veatch, 1988, Martin, 2007). Based on linguistic and semiotic perspectives, researchers focus on the linguistic and communicative mechanisms of humor. They analyze the linguistic devices used in humor such as wordplay, puns, irony, and sarcasm and explain how these devices create humor (Abd Al- Hamed Badr, 2016, El-Masry, 2021). According to sociocultural perspective, researchers explore how humor is influenced by cultural norms, values, and social identities (Jiang, et al 2019, Stanley, 2021). Studying humor from these various angles helps researchers to uncover all its aspects and to reveal its benefits. Dealing with humor from a linguistic perspective is a complex task that differs greatly from cultural, sociological, and psychological studies.

Attardo (2003) points out that until 1985 “no coherent theory of humor had been proposed, that would have been capable of handling humor at all linguistic levels” (p.1287). However, the most prominent theories of linguistic humor are those proposed by Raskin’s (1985) Semantic-Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) and Attardo’s (1994) General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), and Ontological Semantic Theory of Humor (OSTH).

5.1. Social-Psychological Theories of Humor

Three important theories examined humor from a social-psychological perspectives. These three theories are; Superiority Theory, Release/Relief Theory, and Incongruity Theory.

5.1.1. Superiority Theory, on the one hand, was proposed by Sigmund Freud (1905) who referred to humor as a feeling of superiority over others. Funny

things appear when the weaknesses, follies, or absurdities of others are highlighted, allowing others to feel superior. Raskin (1984), points out that people usually laugh because of others' bad luck. Bad luck emphasizes one's superiority to the shortcomings of others.

5.1.2. Release or Relief Theory, on the other hand, was also developed by Freud (1905). The theory suggests that humor is used to reduce or release psychological tension. According to Freud "the idea that joking has a vital psychological function to perform (cited in: Abdalian, 2005, p.7).

5.1.3. The Incongruity Theory, as mentioned by Attardo(1994, p.47), Kant and Schoenhauer, nineteenth-century German philosophers, are the first authors to explore the notion of the term incongruity in the modern age. Along history, many attempts have been made to explain the cause of laughter. One explanation was suggested by Schopenhauer, who states that "the cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation, and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity" (cited in Attardo, 1994, p. 48). According to this view, one can deduce that humor arises from the conflict between abstract concepts and the perception of incongruity. The incongruity theory, thus, suggests that humor arises from the perception of incongruity or a violation of expectations. Humor and jokes are created as a result of a sense of surprise through presenting contradictory or unexpected elements.

In modern research, it is worth noting that the incongruity theory is most accurate in explaining humor. That is why it is considered a dominant theory of humor in philosophy and psychology. However, it is to be noted that there is no unified definition of 'incongruity' as it is not clearly defined by many linguists. A widely common definition that is mentioned by Ritchie Graeme (1999) is:

Laughter arises from the view of two or more inconsistent, unsuitable or incongruous parts or circumstances, considered as united in one complex object or assemblage, or as acquiring a sort of mutual relation from peculiar

manner in which the mind takes notice of them (Beattie , 1776), quoted in Raskin(1985).

According to this definition, humor is created when there is a conflict between what is expected and what actually happens. More specifically, it concentrates on the contrast between the hearer's expectations and the speaker's sudden resolution of the situation. This is what William (1940, p.72) states as he emphasizes the importance of the term incongruity saying that the main cause of humor in any situation is "contradiction" or "incongruity". By the end of any humorous situation, the hearer tries to realize the incongruity of the situation, in order to make the punch line obvious. Accordingly, humor is conveyed and laughter is stimulated.

Among these three theories, Zalta, Edward & Nodelman, Uri (2023), point out that the incongruity theory "seems better able to account for laughter and humor than the scientifically obsolete Relief Theory". Moreover, it seems "more comprehensive than the Superiority Theory since it can account for kinds of humor that do not seem based on superiority, such as puns and other wordplay".

5.2. Linguistic Theories of Humor

Having reviewed the major social-psychological theories of humor, it is essential also to present the linguistic theories of humor, namely, the Semantic-Script theory, the General Theory of Verbal Humor and the Ontological Semantic Theory of Humor.

5.2.1.Semantic-Script Theory (SSTH)

The SSTH was proposed by Victor Raskin in 1985. Raskin's theory changes the prevalent views on studying humor. According to him, humor arises when a situation violates the normal sequence of events or scripts. He means that humor is derived from the violation of expected patterns or scripts, thus, leading to a humorous reinterpretation of the situation. Raskin (1985) refers to the script as "a large chunk of semantic information surrounding the word or evoked by it" (p.81).

Later, Attardo (2001) states that the script refers to some associated information that indicates “how a given entity is structured, what are its parts and components or how an activity is done” (p.2). According to Raskin (1985), a text can be described as a joke if it is “compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts” (p.99). More details about this theory are mentioned below under the theoretical framework section since it is the adopted theory in this study.

5.2.2.General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)

The General Verbal Theory of Humor (GVTH) was suggested by Attardo & Raskin, (1991) as a revision of the Semantic-Script Theory (SSTH). Whereas the SSTH was a semantic theory of humor, the GTVH is a linguistic theory that aims to analyze the joke through a comprehensive linguistic model, showing all aspects of the joke concept. Attardo & Raskin (1991) mention six parameters that are necessary to propose the construction of a joke into the text. These parameters are also regarded as Knowledge Resources (KRs) i.e. language, narrative strategies (NS), targets (TA), situations (SI), and logical mechanisms (LM). The nature of these KRs is as a supporting concept of opposition script (Attardo, 1994, pp.196-9). This it can be said that, in order to consider any text as a joke or a humorous text, it has to contain six knowledge resources. The first KR is language (LA) which includes all the needed information for the verbalization of a text such as phonemes, clusters of phonemes as well as morphemes and phrases (Attardo, 1994, p.223). The second is narrative strategy (NS) which accounts for the way any joke is organized either a simple narrative, as a dialogue (question and answer, as a (pseudo-) riddle, as an aside in conversation, etc. (Attardo, 1994, p. 224). The third KR is target (TA) which selects who is the “butt” of the joke. The targets of humor refer to groups or individuals with humorous stereotypes attached to each other (Attardo, 1994, p.224). Situation (SI) is the fourth KR which refers to the background of events, such as participants, objects, activities, or instruments, etc. Attardo (1994, p.225). The fifth KR is the logical mechanism (LM) which the part of the GTVH that accounts for the resolution of the incongruity (i.e. the script opposition and overlap). The final KR is script opposition which is the only parameter that has been incorporated into the GTVH from Raskin's (1985) Semantic Script Theory (SSTH). It deals with the opposed scripts that are understood by readers in a direct and indirect way (Attardo, 1994, p.226).

Whereas the description and analysis of the previous two theories (SSTH theory and GTVH theory) rely on the native speaker's knowledge and interpretation of a joke, a new theory of humor, that is; the Ontological Semantic Theory of Humor (OSTH) has started to emerge trying to remove human bias from the interpretations of jokes. However, it is to be noted that this new theory hasn't yet gained significant recognition in academic research.

5.3. Ontological Semantic Theory of Humor (OSTH)

Ontological Semantic Theory of Humor (OSTH) is the latest version in the family of script-based linguistic theories of humor, that was developed by Raskin, Taylor and Hempelmann (2009). It embodies the Semantic Script Theory of Humor principles in a fully computational development to remove human bias from any semantic interpretation (Attardo, 2020, p.145). It aims to understand the meaning of words and sentences by examining the concepts and entities they refer to in the real world. It suggests that humor arises from incongruities or unexpected links between different ontological categories or concepts. It emphasizes the role of ontology in understanding language through studying the philosophy of the nature of existence (Taylor, 2017).

Having reviewed the most influential theories of humor, it is to be noted that all the theories are based on the notion of incongruity. This is what Hempelmann and Attardo (2011, p.130) have asserted as they state that the SSTH is classified as an incongruity theory and the GTVH as an incongruity- resolution- theory. Due to the importance of incongruity, the study chooses the incongruity theory in the Semantic script theory of humor to be adopted here. Therefore, it is worth mentioning the previous studies that dealt with the incongruity theory in analyzing humor and jokes.

5.4. Previous Studies Related to Pandemic Humor

It is noteworthy to say that the COVID-19 pandemic is the first of such a pandemic in the past century and has prompted many scholars to study it from different aspects. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to entertaining humor, sweeping social media all over the world. Wang, and Wang, (2022) noted that "since the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic in the early part of 2020, there

have been a series of investigations on pandemic humor”. However, it is noted that few studies have tackled the pandemic with a special focus on humor during the pandemic (Amici, 2020; Chiodo et al., 2020). According to Amici's research, humor may be utilized to separate oneself from negativity and transmit positivity. Humour was used to enhance social cohesion. In their research, Chiodo et al. (2020) stated that the COVID-19 pandemic provides a good opportunity for using humour as a coping mechanism that may also boost “camaraderie and morale”. Moreover, he pointed out that the pandemic encourages the use of gallows humour, which "includes jokes, irony and humorous remarks about frightening topics such as combat or death" (2020, pp.763–764). The following studies provide a range of different perspectives. Some studies consider the cognitive processes, others focus on linguistic aspects, or cultural influences, or psychological impact, or provide a systematic review on humor-related studies.

It is noted that there are many previous studies that have adopted incongruity theory in relation to jokes. In 1981, Vaid & Hull applied incongruity theory to analyze joke completions and they examined how individuals resolve incongruity in the context of joke understanding. They criticized previous studies that overlooked the role of incongruity in joke processing and emphasized the importance of considering incongruity in joke completion tasks. Attardo (1994) proposed a comprehensive work in which he explored various linguistic theories of humor, including incongruity theory. He examined how incongruity is used to create humorous effects in language, with a focus on jokes and wordplay. In 2003, Oring discussed the social and cultural aspects of humor, including incongruity theory. In his book, he explored how incongruity is used in jokes and humor across different cultural contexts. Moreover, he examined the role of shared knowledge and background in resolving incongruity. Nijholt (2003) wrote an article in which he provided an overview of various humor theories, including incongruity theory. He discussed how incongruity theory has been applied in different domains of humor research, including jokes, puns, and verbal humor. Moreover, he highlighted the cognitive processes involved in resolving incongruity. Another perspective on humor was presented by Martin (2007) as he provided an overview of different psychological theories of humor, including incongruity theory. He discussed the cognitive processes involved in resolving

incongruity and how humor emerges from the violation of expectations. In the same year, Ruch & Hehl (2007) examined the relationship between humor appreciation, aesthetic appreciation, and personality traits using incongruity theory as framework. They explored how individuals' cognitive processes in resolving incongruity influence their enjoyment of humor and their preferences for different types of jokes. Suls (2016) provided a comprehensive handbook in which he covered various theories and approaches to humor research, including incongruity theory. Suls (2016) explored the cognitive processes involved in resolving incongruity and the role of incongruity in different forms of humor, including jokes.

During the pandemic, a number of studies focused on Coronavirus pandemic in relation to humor. For example, Amici (2020) explored the use of humor during the period of isolation caused by lockdown measures imposed in Italy as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The study is based on a non-clinical sample. The ad hoc questionnaire measures people's readiness to search for, publish and distribute humorous material during lockdown. It investigates the intentions behind sending content via social media (WhatsApp or similar) and the emotions experienced on receiving such content. Findings show that positive emotions were more frequently the motivation (total 61.32%). A high percentage sent amusing content via social media or SMS (79%). Responses demonstrating a desire to lessen the situation's negative impact or a desire for cohesion were common. Amici concluded that humorous material appears to have served as a means of transmitting positive emotions, distancing oneself from negative events and finding cohesion. In the same year, Kamel wrote a research paper in which she approached verbal techniques of humor creation in comic TV shows. She adopted Raskin's (1985) SSTH in an attempt to analyze linguistically how comedians joke verbally in front of an audience in comic TV shows. She put cultural barriers into consideration throughout the analysis via the role of cultural literacy between the comedians and the audience

On a different perspective, Bischetti et al. (2021), studied the appreciation (funniness and aversiveness) of different formats of COVID-19 humor shared on social media. Results of an analysis of the role of demographic, personality, and psychological distance factors with linear mixed models showed that COVID-19

humor lacks a “signature” of funniness, but displays a mark of aversiveness. The findings of this study expanded the knowledge about dark humor and should raise awareness of the great variation in the emotional impact of COVID-19 humor and of the need to ponder where and with whom to share the laugh about the pandemic. In the same year, Gonot-Schoupinsky & Garip (2021) wrote a chapter in a book in which they highlighted the need for laughter, currently viewed as a by-product of humour within positive psychology (PP), to play a more prominent role. Widening the portrayal of humour and laughter in PP will be helpful to value and harness their individual, and joint, benefits and applications. They called for Third Wave PP to encourage new research directions by embracing the complexity of humour as 1) an interlinked character strength; 2) associated to all core virtues; 3) benefitting overall personal development; and 4) differentiated from but co-equal to laughter.

Torres-Marin et al. (2022) investigated the associations between humor styles, perceived threat from COVID-19, funniness of COVID-19 memes, and individuals’ affective mood in a community sample of 527 Spanish adults. Findings suggested that humor styles aimed at boosting one’s own self, irrespective of their potentially lighter or darker nature, may contribute to alleviating adverse psychological consequences arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Another study that examined Coronavirus English jokes from a pragmatic perspective is written by Al-Saidi, Salman and Rashid (2022) in which they examined implicature in COVID-19 Coronavirus jokes in the light of a neo-Gricean approach adopted by Horn (1989/2004), Attardo (1997) as well as Thomas (1995).

Bageshwar & Zafar (2023) reviewed studies on social media-based COVID-19 humour in 42 research articles that were selected from four databases, viz. Science Direct, Scopus, Taylor & Francis, and Web of Science. The results concerning the characteristics and functions of COVID-19 humour reveal that most studies investigated image-text memes; the most important feature found was ‘humour,’ in addition to others like sarcasm, irony, satire, criticism, juxtaposition, and locality. In addition, it shows that although research on COVID-19 humour on social media is still in an early phase, several findings

appear stable across various studies included in this review. Moreover, most humour studied is not only about the virus or the disease itself, but also focuses on absurd situations individuals found themselves in due to the pandemic and the lockdown that followed.

Alkaraki, Alias & Maros (2024) presented a systematic literature review that they designed to conduct a thorough analysis of existing research on COVID-19 humor on social media, specifically its themes and categories, coping mechanisms, effects on confidence in government institutions, and the use of specific linguistic devices. It examined the role of humor in the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a detailed descriptive qualitative analysis of 49 worldwide studies between 2019 and 2022. The findings revealed that humor serves as a coping mechanism, assisting individuals in navigating the challenges and uncertainties of the pandemic, thereby promoting mental well-being. Humor emerged as a powerful tool to critique government actions, uncover inefficiencies, and shape public discourse. Moreover, linguistic devices, including wordplay, irony, satire, and parody, play a crucial role in conveying messages and emotions related to the pandemic.

Based on this review about the previous studies related to humor and the pandemic, it is to be noted that those studies are clearly different from the present study in terms of the data of analysis and the theories used. Moreover, to the knowledge of the researcher no study was made comparing between two different cultures in terms of jokes about COVID-19. In addition, whereas the previous studies use different perspectives as mentioned above, the present study uses an eclectic approach to study jokes about COVID-19 in two different cultures; Egyptian and American using the SSTH and Conceptual Metaphor theory. It's crucial to note that humor can vary widely among cultures, and people's tastes can vary greatly for what they find funny. Since humor is a complex and diverse aspect of any society, it is significant to give a background of what humor represents in both the Egyptian and American society.

5.5. Humor and Joke in Egyptian Society

When it comes to humor, Egyptians are known for their wit and cleverness in making jokes. In Egyptian culture, humor and jokes are frequently used as a means of social commentary and criticism. Egyptians resort to humor to discuss social issues, political events, and cultural standards in a funny way. They love to make jokes about themselves in an attempt to make light of themselves. Humor plays an important role in Egyptian's life as it serves as a coping mechanism for them, especially in challenging or stressful situations. It helps them adapt through life's ups and downs. Moreover, humor and jokes shape and reinforce Egyptian cultural identity. They reflect the values, beliefs, and traditions of the society, and act as a way to transmit cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. The rise of the internet and social media platforms has had a significant impact on the spread of humor in Egyptian culture especially jokes, memes, viral videos, and online communities .

5.6. Humor and Jokes in American Society

Americans are known for their sense of humor. This may be due to the fact that they come from different countries, each contributing their own aspect of what is funny. Because American culture is incredibly diverse, it is noted that humor reflects this diversity. They use jokes for different purposes. Standup comedy is considered by many to be essentially American. There are also many TV shows that are considered humorous and satirical at the same time. Satire is a prevalent form of humor, with comedians and comedy shows using wit and irony to shed light on societal issues, political events, and cultural norms. The present study aims to analyze some jokes created by Americans for deeper understanding of the sociocultural American aspects especially in hard times such as the pandemics.

6. Significance of the Study

This study might contribute to humor research for the following reasons. Linguistically speaking, the literature mentioned above focuses majorly on verbal

humor concerning semantics, cognition, and pragmatics. However, this current study proposes a focused semantic approach to verbal humor putting cultural factors into consideration by examining conceptual metaphors found in the jokes under investigation which makes this study unique. Thus, the study is based on two linguistic theories commonly used for understanding humor in two different cultures. These include the conceptual metaphor theory and the semantic-script theory. This combined framework provides a comprehensive analysis and understanding of jokes that belong to two different cultures, namely; Egyptian and American. Thus, the paper contributes to humor research paper via a profound analysis of jokes in different cultures. Moreover, the study highlights to what extent how the conceptual metaphors in the collected data are different or the same when it comes to Covid-19 and quarantine in the two societies. It investigates whether Egyptian and American jokes reflect the same anxieties and challenges of living through a pandemic or not.

7. Theoretical Framework

Humor and jokes are essential aspects of human communication, reflecting cultural values, beliefs, and social dynamics. They serve as powerful tools for expressing and understanding cultural differences and similarities. The study aims to explore the differences between American and Egyptian jokes by employing two theoretical framework, namely; Semantic Script theory and Conceptual Metaphor Theory as analytical frameworks. The Semantic Script theory, on the one hand, offers a framework that considers the role of established scripts and schemas in shaping humor. By analyzing jokes through the lens of the Semantic Script theory, the study aims to identify a semantic model capable of expressing the incongruities between semantic scripts in the collected data of jokes and how humor is created in both cultures. On the other hand, Conceptual Metaphor theory posits that metaphors are not just linguistic devices but also cognitive tools that shape our understanding of the world. By analyzing American and Egyptian jokes through this lens, the study uncovers the underlying conceptual metaphors and cognitive mappings that structure these jokes' humorous elements. Hence, the theory delves into the cultural differences and examines how conceptual metaphors are utilized in humor across different cultures. Through this analysis, we can gain insights into the cultural nuances and metaphorical associations that

contribute to the humor in each culture's jokes. However, before displaying the theoretical frameworks adopted here, it is worth mentioning some basic concepts about jokes, its structure and types since it is the core of this study.

Jokes are defined in terms of incongruity as laughter being the result of the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects it is believed to be associated with. Jokes consist of three basic elements: build up, pivot, and punch line. The build up is the body of the joke, introducing it, while the pivot is the group of words or phrases around which incongruity is built. The punch line is the conclusion of the joke, disrupting the narrative for humorous purposes.

Linguists (such as Attardo (1994); Attardo (2003); Schmitz (2002)) classified jokes into different types, such as referential, verbal, canned, cultural, and linguistic. Referential jokes are based on the meaning of the given text, while verbal jokes are based on the meaning of different elements of the text. Canned jokes are short narratives ending in a punch line and cultural jokes are laughter closely connected to culture. Linguistic jokes are based on some linguistic features. Knowing these classifications helps the researcher to identify the types of jokes under investigation which can, in turn, help in understanding a particular joke as it not only requires knowledge of the language used to convey the joke, but also other types of knowledge such as cultural knowledge. The jokes under investigation come from two different cultures, American and Egyptian, and are related to COVID-19 as a universal crisis. In addition, the study deals with jokes in terms of incongruity.

7.1. The Script-based Semantic Theory of Humor

Most of the research on humor in linguistics did not focus on the semantics of humor, although the essence of humor is semantic according to Attardo (2020, p.124). It is to be noted that the Semantic-Script Theory of Humor is widely recognized to have been one of the most successful theories of humor. Raskin (1984) hypothesizes that a text can be a joke if two essential conditions are present. These two conditions are: “the text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different [semantic] scripts, and the two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite (Raskin, 1984, p.99). This hypothesis is based on the fact that humor is a result of the sudden encounter of two ideas that do not fit together.

However, he asserts that the existence of two scripts opposing each other does not guarantee humor because there are other variables that govern its production. Therefore, he presents various types of script opposition, such as good/bad, life/death, obscene/non-obscene, money/no money, high/low stature, normal/abnormal, possible/impossible, and actual/non-actual (Raskin, 1984, p.114). Incongruity reshapes people's perceptions of things through its critical and opposing dimensions of social activities, political ideas, and religious beliefs. Raskin proposes various examples of jokes and introduces different categories of script opposition, such as judgmental dichotomy, death vs. life, obscene/non-obscene, and money/no money. A complete list of possible script oppositions for jokes is finite and culturally dependent.

Raskin (1984, p.100) points out that joke telling is a form of non-bona-fide communication that occurs in four different situations. In the first case, the speaker makes the joke unintentionally, engaging in bona-fide communication, aiming for an unambiguous statement. In the second case, the hearer initially interprets the speaker's statement as bona-fide communication, but after unsuccessful attempts, they search for alternative interpretations, leading to the joke-telling mode. In the third case, the hearer is "attuned" to the joke and does not attempt to interpret the text within this mode. In the fourth case, there is a possibility that an act of bona-fide communication occurs if some non-humorous interpretation of the speaker's utterance is possible. In this case, the unintended and unnoticed ambiguity is suppressed.

Mentioning that a joke is humorous if it is compatible with two scripts which are opposite, it implies that the switch from one script to the other is triggered by either ambiguity or contradiction. The trigger introduces the second script and suggests a second interpretation of the text. That is what Raskin (1984) asserts as he states that "the usual effect of the trigger is exactly this: by introducing the second script it casts a shadow on the first script and the part of the text which introduced it, and imposes a different interpretation on it, which is different from the most obvious one" (p.114). Ambiguity, according to Dynel (2009), is the case in which there are two interpretations competing with each other, although she

admits that it is possible that there could be more than two interpretations. (Dyner 2009, p. 124). There are two types of ambiguity commonly used as the source of humors: lexical and syntactic ambiguity. Lexical ambiguity, on the one hand, involves manipulation of legitimate and meaningful morpheme/lexeme, eliciting a serious and humorous interpretation. This ambiguity uses homonymy and polysemy, which can involve word class change (Seewoester, 2009). On the other hand, syntactic ambiguity occurs in a sentence level due to the structure of the sentence. Syntactic jokes depend on a duality of interpretation motivated by the structural patterns of the language system, not of any lexical item but of the sentence of the syntactic level (Lew, 1996 , p. 128). The other major type of trigger is the contradiction trigger, which is more complex in nature. It operates differently from ambiguity, with some lexical triggers being ambiguous words and phrases. A slight variety of the contradiction trigger is the dichotomizing trigger, which is created by a pair of antonyms built into the joke. In a joke, the roles are usually reversed, creating a type of contradiction, triggered by a combination of the trigger and the conventions of the mode of communication (Raskin, 1985, pp.116-117).

It is also worth mentioning that Raskin (1985) analyzes the Script-based Semantic Theory of Humour (SSTH) as a linguistic analysis of incongruity. He believes that for jokes to generate humour, a connection between two scripts must be established. This leads to the incongruity theory, which suggests that humour is produced by an identified incongruity and its resolution. However, Raskin (1985) emphasizes that the incongruities must overlap or be associated, and without this connection, humour cannot be produced. He concludes that incongruity is best understood linguistically with the SSTH, which can be applied to other humorous texts such as jokes.

7.1.1. The Interpretation of a Joke

Ritchie (2004, p.59) suggests that any humorous situation or passage can be examined and analyzed in terms of having two main parts that are somehow incompatible. It can be said that a joke is a text that consists of many overlapping

scripts of which every script is the set-up or the punch line of another one. The introductory part is usually referred to as the set-up, and the second one is called the punch line, which may take the form of one word or a group of words. Moreover, Ritchie (2004) states that the setup of a joke can be interpreted in two different ways, however, the reader typically interprets one meaning only which is the more obvious meaning and remains unaware of the alternative interpretation. The punch line, however, contradicts this apparent interpretation and aligns with, and even brings forth, the previously hidden meaning. The punch line operates on a cognitive level, allowing the mind to establish connections with the body of the joke based on the information given, thereby eliciting the intended meaning.

Raskin (1985) points out that comprehending a joke relies on the ability to interpret its semantic meaning, which is influenced by two sources: the lexicon (vocabulary) and our knowledge about the world we live in. The minds store a collection of cognitive structures, similar to how the meanings of words in the languages are internalized when we speak. Generally speaking, these cognitive structures can be referred to as "common sense" and encompass our comprehension of different routines, standard procedures, basic situations, and more. In other words, they represent our knowledge of how people typically behave in certain situations, the processes they follow, the order in which things occur, and more. Here, according to the SSTH, these cognitive structures are commonly referred to as scripts. After displaying the SSTH, it is significant also to demonstrate the Conceptual Metaphor theory (CM) due to its importance to the analysis of this study.

7.2. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual metaphor is a cognitive linguistic approach that involves understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another as asserted by Kovecses (2010, p.3). It involves thinking about various concepts, such as life, love, arguments, theories, ideas, and social organizations in terms of other concepts such as journey, war, buildings, food and plants, respectively. He states that two domains participate in conceptual metaphor: the source domain and the target domain. The source domain is the conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions are drawn, while the target domain is understood this way. Examples

of linguistic expressions used to talk about target domains, as presented in Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) book, include "an argument is war," "an argument is indefensible," "He attacked every weak point in my argument," and "He shot down all of my arguments". Kovecses (2010) distinguishes between conceptual metaphor and metaphorical linguistic expressions, stating that linguistic expressions are manifestations of conceptual metaphors.

Conceptual metaphors typically use a more abstract concept as target and a more concrete or physical concept as their source. To fully understand an abstract concept, it is better to use another concept that is more concrete, physical, or tangible than the abstract target concept. This principle of unidirectionality suggests that the metaphorical process typically goes from the more concrete to the more abstract but not the other way around (Kovecses, 2010, p.7). Moreover, conceptual metaphor is considered as a set of mappings that characterize the relationship between two concepts (A and B) in a metaphorical process. The question is how A is understood in terms of B, with constituent conceptual elements of B corresponding to constituent elements of A. For example:

Source: JOURNEY	Target: LOVE
the obstacles encountered	the difficulties experienced
decisions about which way to go	choices about what to do
the destination of the journey	the goal(s) of the relationship

According to the Conceptual Metaphor theory, the metaphorical process involves a set of correspondences between the source and target, such as the journey, events, obstacles, difficulties, decisions, and destination of the journey (Kovecses, 2010).

Kovecses (2010) presents some of the most common source and target domains. He states that the source domains, on the one hand, include the human body, health and illness, animals, machines and tools, buildings and construction, plants, games and sport, cooking and food, economic transactions, forces, light and darkness, heat and cold, and movement and direction. On the other hand, the common targets

include emotion, desire, morality, thought, society, religion, politics, economy, human relationships, communication, events and actions, time, and life and death. According to these examples, it can be deduced that the target domains fall into such higher groups as psychological and mental states and events, social groups and processes, and personal experiences.

Conceptual metaphors can be classified according to the cognitive functions that they perform into three general kinds, namely; structural, ontological, and orientational. As for the structural metaphor, its cognitive function is to understand target concepts by means of the structure of source domain. For instance, the concept of time is structured according to motion and space, with the TIME IS MOTION metaphor focusing on basic elements such as physical objects, their locations, and motion. The metaphors are structured into two distinct cases: "TIME PASSING IS MOTION OF AN OBJECT AND TIME PASSING IS AN OBSERVER'S MOTION OVER A LANDSCAPE." In the first case, the observer is static, and times are objects moving with respect to the observer. In the second case, times are fixed locations and the observer is moving with respect to time. Kovecses (2010, p.38) asserts that these mappings not only explain the meaning of certain expressions but also provide a basic overall structure for the notion of time. Without the metaphor, it would be difficult to imagine what the concept of time would be. Most structural metaphors provide this kind of structuring and understanding for their target concepts.

The second type is ontological metaphor which provides much less cognitive structuring for target concepts than structural ones do. Its cognitive function is to give a new ontological status to general categories of abstract target concepts and to bring about new abstract entities. It assigns a basic status in terms of objects, substances, and the like to many of our experiences, particularly those that are not clearly delineated, vague, or abstract. Target domains include physical objects, non-physical or abstract entities, substance, and states. Undelineated experiences receive a more delineated status via ontological metaphors, which can be used to refer to, quantify, or identify aspects of the experience. Personification is another form of ontological metaphor, where human qualities are given to non-human

entities. This is common in literature and everyday discourse, as seen in examples like "his theory explained to me the behavior of chickens raised in factories," "life has cheated me," "cancer finally caught up with him," and "the computer went dead on me." In personifying non-humans as humans, they are understood better. Concepts are conceptualized in a uniform manner, with upward orientations tending to be inclined to positive evaluation and downward orientations tending to go with a negative one. Positive-negative evaluation is not limited to spatial orientation up-down, but also extends to various spatial image schemas, with positive concepts being whole, center, link, balance, in, goal, and front, and negative concepts being not whole, periphery, no link, imbalance, out, no goal, and back.

The different types of metaphor are significant to the present study in the sense that finding out which of these kinds of metaphors is frequently used in the collected data of both American and Egyptian jokes, the study uncover the underlying conceptual metaphors and cognitive mappings that structure these jokes' humorous elements. Thus, an insight into the cultural differences and metaphorical associations that contribute to the humor in each culture's jokes. In addition, by conducting a comparative analysis of American and Egyptian jokes using these two theoretical frameworks, the aim is to shed light on the cultural differences and similarities in humor in both the American and Egyptian cultures. It seeks to deepen our understanding of how conceptual metaphors and incongruities contribute to the creation of jokes in these two distinct cultural contexts.

8. Data Analysis

A comparative study of American and Egyptian jokes about Covid-19 and quarantine would be an interesting topic to explore. However, it is important to note that humor is culturally specific and varies greatly across different languages and societies. Therefore, any differences between the two cultures in terms of jokes about Covid-19 may be influenced by cultural, social, and linguistic factors. The first part of this section is an analysis of sixteen American jokes. An explanation of the joke in terms of the semantic script theory is given, followed by an

exploration of the type of conceptual metaphor used in the joke showing its significance. Then, the second part is devoted to the analysis of sixteen Egyptian jokes. First a translation of the joke into English is provided, followed by a description the joke in terms of the semantic script theory, followed by an investigation of the type of conceptual metaphor use in each joke.

8.1. The Analysis of the American Jokes

This section presents an analysis of 16 American jokes according to the Semantic Script Theory and Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

Joke 1: "Quarantine has turned us all into dogs. We roam the house all day looking for food. We're told 'no' if we get too close to strangers. And we get really excited about car rides."

According to the Semantic Script Theory, humor results from the violation of established social norms or expectations. In this joke the semantic script is used in a way to compare human behavior during quarantine with usual behaviors associated with dogs. It draws attention, in a humorous way, to similarities between the actions of dogs (such as roaming for food, being cautious around strangers, and getting excited about car rides) and humans' actions by establishing the semantic script of dogs as a point of reference. The humor arises from the unexpected connection between human and dog behavior within the established script of quarantine. In other words, the joke plays on an exaggerated image of human behavior during quarantine, thus presenting humans as having acquired dog-like behaviors due to the circumstances of quarantine. Moreover, the joke relies on shared experiences and knowledge of dog behavior and quarantine restrictions. By referring to familiar behaviors associated with dogs and the common experience of quarantine, the joke relies on the reader's understanding and recognition of such situations, and hence, reinforcing the humor. Furthermore, it is to be noted that the joke contains a conceptual metaphor in which humans are compared to dogs in order to convey the shared experiences

and behaviors during quarantine. The metaphorical mapping allows the reader to conceive the monotonous life of quarantine (such as roaming the house, seeking food, maintaining distance from strangers, and getting excited about car rides) through the lens of a dog's actions, adding a sense of humor to the joke. The type of conceptual metaphor, here, is **ontological** that provides ways of highlighting the experience of being in quarantine by comparing it to being a dog through its common attributes and behaviors.

Joke 2: "Who's idea was it to sing 'Happy Birthday' while washing your hands? Now every time I go to the bathroom, my kids expect me to walk out with a cake."

Similarly, joke no. 2 plays also with the semantic script, however, this time by associating washing hands and to singing "Happy Birthday" as a measure of time. According to the Semantic Script Theory, the humor is created through exaggerating the expectation of the kids that their father will walk out with a cake every time they go to the bathroom to wash their hands. The humor, here, arises from the violation of the unexpected and humorous association between washing hands and the the cultural practice of celebrating birthdays. In America, during the COVID-19 pandemic, "Happy Birthday" song gained prominence as a way to guarantee proper hand hygiene. The humor derives from the unexpected consequence that the speaker's kids associate going to the bathroom with the expectation of a birthday celebration, symbolized by walking out with a cake. The violation of the expected script for going to the bathroom and the humorously exaggerated reaction of the kids creates the humor in this joke. There is an example of an **ontological** metaphor in this joke through the exaggeration in associating singing "Happy Birthday" while washing hands and the expectation of a celebration. It utilizes the idea of a birthday traditional practice (celebrating with a cake) to humorously express the concept of an unexpected consequence resulting from the act of singing "Happy Birthday" while washing hands.

Joke 3: "My husband purchased a world map and then gave me a dart and said, 'Throw this and wherever it lands—that's where I'm taking you when this pandemic ends.' Turns out, we're spending two weeks behind the

fridge."

Many people have been unable to plan for their vacation during the COVID-19 pandemic because of safety measures and quarantine measures. The humor in joke no.3 stems from the semantic script of arranging a future trip after the pandemic and the unexpected outcome of the dart landing in an odd place behind the refrigerator. The humor comes from the common experience of delaying travel plans and the absurdness of spending a holiday behind the fridge. Throwing a dart is an example of a **structural** metaphor that represents the selection of a travel destination.

Joke 4: "My mom always told me I wouldn't accomplish anything by lying in bed all day. But look at me now, ma! I'm saving the world!"

This joke plays with the semantic script of being a couch potato and unproductive by wasting time and lying all day in bed doing nothing and the idea of accomplishing significant achievements. The humor arises from the twist of being in bed all day— a notion that was previously viewed by the majority of mothers as a lack of accomplishment and the fact that lying in bed during the pandemic is now equal to saving the world and making progress. It is to be noted that the joke highlights the cultural value of productivity and the idea of achievement through working and being active. The joke plays on the contrast between the mother's expectation and the unexpected outcome of the speaker's actions. An **orientational** metaphor in this joke uses the concept of lying in bed all day to express the idea of accomplishing something significant (saving the world) by being in that position.

Joke 5: "After years of wanting to thoroughly clean my house but lacking the time, this week I discovered that wasn't the reason."

This joke plays with the semantic script of wanting to clean the house, but the lack of time is the obstacle of cleaning it. However, the humor arises from the unexpected confession that lack of time was not the actual reason for not cleaning the house. It is obvious that the joke does not rely on conceptual metaphor. It only

plays on words and does not rely on metaphorical comparisons. It is noted that the joke reflects the cultural expectation of maintaining a clean and organized home. The humor reflects the shared experience of doing nothing especially because of laziness. In addition, the humorous twist derives from the fact that shortage of time could be one of the reasons but not the main reason for not completing household chores. Stating that time was not the main reason destroys the expected script and adds humor to the situation. This unexpected twist creates the humor in the joke as the speaker realizes the true reason for not cleaning was not a shortage of time, yet laziness or a lack of desire.

Joke 6: "If I keep stress-eating at this level, the buttons on my shirt will start socially distancing from each other."

This joke plays with the semantic script of stress-eating which refers to consuming food as a coping mechanism during stressful times and the concept of social distancing. It introduces a humorous comparison between the buttons on the person's shirt and the idea of social distancing due to the excessive eating. This unexpected twist between the concept of social distancing and the physical separation of buttons on a shirt creates a humorous effect. The joke reflects the cultural context of the Coronavirus pandemic and the widespread familiarity with the concept of social distancing. The humor derives from the shared experience of stress-eating reflected in the metaphor of the buttons on the speaker's shirt "socially distancing" from each other and the playful application of the social distancing which is one of the measures recommended during the pandemic. The conceptual metaphor in this joke is, thus, an **ontological** metaphor. It humorously uses the concept of social distancing to convey the idea that the buttons on the shirt will be far apart due to excessive stress-eating. This unexpected comparison between the two unrelated concepts generates humor.

Joke 7: "Being quarantined with a talkative child is like having an insane parrot glued to your shoulder".

Joke no. 7 uses the semantic script of being quarantined with a chatty toddler and the feeling of carrying a crazy parrot on one's shoulder. A humorous comparison between the two situations is presented, highlighting the ceaseless and repetitive speech. Based on the shared cultural knowledge of the troubles associated with having a talkative child during quarantine which was the prevailed situation in many homes at that time. It humorously exaggerates the child's talkativeness and compares it to an insane parrot, subverting the social script of spending time with children during quarantine. The unexpected comparison and the humorous image it evokes creates the humorous effect in this joke. Based on this comparison one may deduce that there is a **structural** metaphor in which a similarity is drawn between being quarantined with a talkative child and having an insane parrot stuck to your shoulder.

Joke 8: "Since we're all in quarantine I guess we'll be making only inside jokes from now on."

This joke uses the semantic script of being in quarantine and the concept of inside jokes. A humorous twist arises from the comparison that since the general public are in quarantine, the jokes made during that time will also be 'inside' jokes. It can be said that the joke relies on the shared experience of being in quarantine, which has become the prevailed phenomenon because of the COVID-19 pandemic. One explanation is that the humor arises from the indication that everyone is now part of the same inside joke due to the shared experience of quarantine. Another explanation is that since all are in quarantine, jokes made by people are all about events or things happening inside the home not outside. The joke uses an **orientational** metaphor which suggests that "inside jokes" refers to jokes that are comprehended by a particular group of people who share the same experience or knowledge. The joke humorously extends this concept to imply that, in quarantine, all jokes will be "inside jokes" because everyone is sharing the same experience. By stating that "we'll be making only inside jokes from now on" due to quarantine, the joke subverts the expectation that inside jokes are limited to specific contexts or groups. Hence, the humor comes from playing on words and

the twist of meaning, as the phrase "inside jokes" has two meanings, literally it refers to jokes made inside the house and figuratively it refers to jokes understood by a specific group. The joke uses the spatial concept of being inside to represent the idea that jokes made during quarantine will now be limited to the experiences of being at home.

Joke 9: "This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into my house, told my dog — we laughed a lot."

The joke plays with the semantic script that highlights the behavior of talking to pets and the funny assumption that cat can understand. There is a contrast between what the neighbor thinks about his/her cat that understands his/her and the fact that cats are not recognized for being able to comprehend human language. Compared to dogs, they are typically viewed as independent and reserved pets. The unexpected comparison between the neighbor's behavior with his/her cat and the speaker's conversation with his dog whom he talks to and laughed together what makes the situation humorous. There is an **ontological** metaphor, here, as the joke uses the conceptual metaphor of giving animals human-like understanding. The speaker's reply, telling his dog and they both laughed, adds humor to the situation while reinforcing the idea that people and animals do not comprehend one another.

Joke 10: "Nothing like relaxing on the couch after a long day of being tense on the couch."

This joke plays with the semantic script of relaxation after a long exhausting day on couch and the the usual concept of relaxation associated with couches. The irony of the situation and the contrast between stress and relaxation creates the humor in the joke. It is found that the joke plays on the shared experience of spending extended periods of time at home during quarantine, where the couch becomes a symbol of both comfort and imprisonment, thus, creating humor. The

joke relies on the conceptual metaphor of physical tension and comfort. It is an **orientational** metaphor that humorously suggests that sitting on a couch can cause tension, despite its usual association with relaxation. It uses the spatial concept of being on the couch to represent the idea of experiencing tension or stress.

Joke 11: "Day 121 at home and the dog is looking at me like, 'See? This is why I chew the furniture!'"

The joke demolishes the social norms of staying at home for a long time during the pandemic. The contrast between the behavior of the dog (chewing furniture) and the feeling of boredom that comes with being confined to home, creates the humor here. The humor comes from the irony that the dog, who is usually associated with destructive behavior, now seems to mock the speaker for being in a similar situation. This highlights the humorous frustration of the dog and the absurdity of the situation. It is obvious that the joke utilizes a **structural** metaphor that attributes human feelings and thoughts to animals by drawing a comparison between the speaker's behavior due to the extended stay at home and the destructive behavior of dogs.

Joke 12: "I've gained so much weight during lockdown my bathroom scale is telling me that it can only weigh one person at a time."

This joke plays with the semantic script of gaining weight during lockdown and the reaction of the bathroom scale. The joke depends on the literal meaning of the message shown on the scale which states only one person can be hold at a time due to the increased weight. This unexpected twist between the expected function of the scale and the scale's message that the speaker has put on so much weight during lockdown creates the humor. Normally, scales are used to measure weight accurately, however in this instance, the scale's exaggerated response which gives an impression that it is a person is peculiar and unexpected. The joke makes use of cultural experiences around weight gain and the difficulties of

maintaining one's health during lockdown. Moreover, it is based on the shared experience of the gaining weight during the lockdown period that many people suffered from due to changes in habits which, in turn, caused a reduction in their physical activity. The metaphorical expression of the bathroom scale's humorous response is an example of **structural** metaphor which suggests that the speaker has gained so much weight.

Joke 13: "Lockdown means you get to decide each day what outfit you'll wear in your living room."

The humorous twist in joke no.13 comes from the contrast between the traditional context of choosing costumes for going out and the unexpected context of choosing costumes for the living room. In this respect, the joke depends on the social script of wearing outfits while going outside the house for different purposes. However, during the quarantine period, people feel free to select what outfit they want to wear while going to their living room, this indicates that they no longer need to wear their clothes for outside social activities. It is to be noted that the joke depends on the shared experience of spending more time at home during lockdown. Moreover, it reflects the idea that selecting outfits for an at-home setting becomes something creativity in the very common routine of daily life. It can be noticed that there is a structural metaphor in which wearing an outfit means going out.

Joke 14: "What does eating raw garlic have to do with preventing COVID-19? It helps keep everyone at a safe distance."

As obviously seen from the contradiction between the expected value of eating raw garlic and the unexpected twist that it helps keep people at a safe distance because of its odour, the humor is created. The joke subverts the social script of precautions against COVID-19 by introducing a humorous alternative to social distancing. It plays with the established script of protecting oneself and others from the virus and introduces a comical twist by recommending that chewing

garlic helps maintain a safe distance. It plays on the shared understanding of precautions and humorously suggests an unconventional method. In other words, it draws on the cultural context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread awareness of social distancing measures. The joke contains an **ontological** metaphor in which eating raw garlic creates a physical smell that keeps people at a safe distance, similar to the social distancing measures.

Joke 15: "I would make a COVID-19 joke, but it would be tasteless."

This joke relies on the contradiction between the expectation of making a joke and the unexpected twist that it would be tasteless which is one of the symptoms that one can have if he/she has a coronavirus. This twist creates humor, especially with the use of pun in the word "tasteless." The joke uses cultural experiences related to one of the symptoms of COVID-19 which is the loss of taste. In this joke, the underlying conceptual metaphor is that jokes have taste, while COVID-19 jokes are tasteless. Here, an **ontological** metaphor is found in which it treats abstract concepts (e.g., jokes,) as if they possess concrete properties (e.g., taste) and applies the reasoning associated with those properties. It plays on the double meaning of "tasteless," referring both to a joke as lacking in humor and to the idea that making a joke about a sensitive topic like COVID-19 would be inappropriate.

Joke 16: "What's the worst part of homeschooling? You can't transfer students out of your class."

This joke relies on the contradiction between the expected difficulties of homeschooling and the unexpected twist of the inability to transfer students out of the class. The humor arises from the unexpected connection between homeschooling and the lack of ability to transfer students. The joke, thus, subverts the social script of traditional schooling and introduces a humorous critique of homeschooling. It humorously suggests that homeschooling lacks the flexibility of transferring students between classes. This joke does not heavily rely on

conceptual metaphors. However, it relates to the cultural context of homeschooling, which became more prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After displaying the analysis of the American jokes, the following section deals with the analysis of the selected Egyptian jokes.

8.2. Egyptian Jokes Analysis

This section presents 20 Egyptian jokes that are translated and analyzed in terms of the Semantic Script Theory and the Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

1- الصحة بتقول اغسل ايديك لمدة عشرين ثانية قبل الاكل. أهلي جايبين كباب رحت أغسل ايدي ورجعت لقيتهم بيشرّبوا الشاي.

Translation: Ministry of health announces: wash your hands for twenty seconds before eating. My family brought kabab, and when I went to wash my hands I came back and found them drinking tea.

The humor in this joke comes from the unexpected contradiction between the person's action of washing his hands for hygiene and his family's action of finishing the kabab without waiting for him. The expected behavior that his family will wait for him till he washes his hands and the actual behavior that they have finished the kabab and even drinks the tea which is a habit among Egyptians to drink tea after the meal what creates the humor in this joke. The humor arises when the person follows the health advice to wash his hands, but finds his family not following the same advice and not caring to wash their hands and instead, they were engaged in eating the kabab which he was longing to eat it as it is a delicious dish that is favored by many Egyptians. It is to be noted that the joke highlights a cultural awareness of the importance of hygiene and cleanliness in relation to COVID-19. It highlights the humorous aspect of a common situation where some people may take hygiene measures more seriously than others around them. Moreover, it is to be noted that the joke plays on the metaphorical concept of time as a physical entity that can be measured by washing hands for 20 seconds to guarantee perfect hygiene. Besides, drinking tea is another metaphor that suggests

finishing the meal. Both metaphors can be considered **ontological** metaphors in which an abstraction such as an activity, emotion, or idea, is represented as something concrete.

2- بعد ما فشل موضوع وعي الشعب احنا دلوقتي بنراهن علي جدعنة الفيروس.

Translation: After the failure of public awareness, we are now betting on the virus's manhood.

This joke plays with the semantic script of the public awareness and the unexpected solution suggested, which is based on the personification of the virus as if it were a human being that can stop this situation. The unexpected twist creates a humorous effect. The joke reflects a cultural perspective on the importance of public awareness and the frustration that can arise when it fails. It uses humor to comment on the perceived ineffectiveness of public awareness campaigns and the reliance on unconventional solutions. The humor arises from the incongruity of the situation, emphasizing the apparent absence of applicable measures in tackling the problem. The joke used personification as the speaker humorously attributes human characteristics (manhood) to the virus. Accordingly, it criticizes the lack of public awareness and suggests in a humorous way that the only solution for this problem is to count on the virus itself, and consider it as a strong powerful man who is aware of the dangerous of the virus and can stop this difficult situation. The type of metaphor in ‘the virus is a powerful man’ is **ontological** because it assigns human characteristics which is powerfulness to an entity; that is, the virus. The metaphor indicates that the virus possesses qualities of strength, influence, or dominance, much like a powerful man would.

3- النهاردة بس عرفت قيمة الكمامة.. عدت جنب واحد سالف منه فلوس ومعرفنيش.

Translation: It is just today that I realized the value of the mask. I passed by someone I owed money to, and he didn't recognize me.

The joke plays with the semantic script of the unexpected outcome of a person being unrecognized by a person he owes money to because of wearing a mask. The humor, here, depends on the contradiction between the person's intention to wear the mask to protect himself from the virus and the unintended consequence of protecting someone from debt repayment by wearing the mask. The humor, here, is created after knowing the extended value of wearing a mask. The joke plays on the double meaning of "value" – one is typically obvious; that is, the importance of wearing a mask for health reasons and the other conveys a message that is not so clear; that is, the monetary value of the mask itself. Accordingly, the joke reflects a cultural awareness of the hidden benefits of wearing masks, such as anonymity and concealment, which creates the humorous situations. It highlights the shared experience of owing money to someone, adding a relatable element to the humor. The joke contains an **ontological** metaphor in which it assigns a physical attribute (wearing a mask) to an abstract concept (disguise). It suggests that the act of wearing a mask is representative of disguise, emphasizing the notion of hiding one's true identity.

4- وكان المصريون القدماء في عام ٢٠٢٠ يحتفظون بملابس خروجهم إيماناً منهم بأن هناك حياة بعد الحظر.

Translation: In 2020, the ancient Egyptians kept their going-out costumes as a sign of their belief in life after the lockdown.

In this joke, there is a humorous observation as they named those people who will survive after the Coronavirus in the year 2020 as the ancient Egyptians. The humor arises from the irony that the ancient Egyptians, who lived thousands of years ago, believed in the concept of life after death and, thus, kept their burial clothes. However, in the context of the joke, it humorously suggests that the people who will survive till 2020, after the pandemic is over and the lockdown ends, will be keeping their going-out garments, showing their belief in a life after the lockdown and the disappearances of the virus. The joke humorously depends on the contrast between ancient beliefs in the afterlife and modern circumstances after the pandemic. There is an **ontological** metaphor in this joke as clothing is used as a symbol of social activities or events. The preserved clothes represent a

metaphorical expression of the anticipation and hope for life returning to normal after the lockdown. After death, ancient Egyptians were known for their belief in an afterlife, and, accordingly, they prepared for their burial rituals. By comparing this belief with the modern circumstances of the pandemic and lockdown, the joke highlights the endless feature of human beings of hope to survive and the capability to create humor from this unexpected relationship between two different periods of time and cultural practices.

5- علي فكرة انت طلعت سلبية وانت عديم المسؤولية وأناني ومتسلط ومهمل وعاش في الوهم ومبتفكرش غير في نفسك ومامتك هي اللي ممشياك يا مدام انا الدكتور وبقولك نتيجة التحليل.

Translation: By the way, you eventually become negative; and as for you, you are selfish, authoritative, negligent, living in delusion, only thinking about yourself, and your mother is leading you. Madam, I am your doctor, and I'm telling you the test result.

The joke plays with the semantic script of the unexpected twist of the doctor's medical test results and the misunderstanding of the patient who started to evaluate his personal qualities, thus creating the humor of the joke. In fact, the joke reflects a cultural awareness of the importance of test results as a form of evaluation. In this joke, the evaluation of both the doctor as well as the patient is used in humorous way, as the patient misunderstood the doctor's test result that she is negative and she thought he was criticizing her and accordingly, she started to criticize his personal qualities as if it was a scene between her and her husband in which they exchange accusations of their personal qualities in an exaggerated way creating humor. It is found that the joke employs the conceptual metaphor of test results as a metaphorical evaluation of someone's character traits. It is a **structural** metaphor that involves mapping an abstract concept, that is, the evaluation of medical results onto another abstract concept, that is, the evaluation of character traits. The negative evaluation mentioned by the patient is metaphorically associated to the idea of being "negative" in the medical result.

٦-نفتح تدريجي ، وزي ما تيجي تيجي و لا نفتح حبة حبة و اللي خايف يستخبي؟

Translation: The question is: Should we open gradually, and whatever happens, happens or should we open bit by bit, and those who are afraid, hide?

During the pandemic, the Egyptian government decided to make a complete closure for all the government offices, commercial centers, cafes, restaurants and others and the “Stay at Home” campaign became the slogan at that time. Then, the government changed its plan and started to ease its precautionary measures to face the virus by reducing the hours of the curfew and reopen commercial centers and other facilities gradually. Yet, this causes an increase in the number of infections. In spite of that, the government did not return back in its decision of easing the curfew measures. Instead, it stood in a gray area defending the necessity of keeping the wheel of production turning alongside with the coronavirus. During this gradual return to normal life, the Egyptians took the opportunity to make numerous jokes about the decision and the above joke is one of the jokes that was launched at that time. The joke plays on the script of gradually reopening after the lockdown and the fear people may have about it, suggesting that those who are afraid might hide or avoid the process of reopening. The joke, thus, reflects the cautious approach to reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic and the apprehension some people may feel about returning to normalcy. Moreover, it is noted that the joke does not rely on conceptual metaphor, however, it depends on rhyming words and repetition. These devices create a pleasant musical effect, aid memorability and increase the comedic sense in the joke.

٧-موضوع كورونا مش محتاج مسحات ودفع مبالغ طائلة ..هات حتة بسبوسة و حتة جبنة قديمة ودوق..
لو الاتنين واحد يبقي سلم لي علي المترو

Translation: The coronavirus issue doesn't need swabs and overpayments. Just bring a piece of basbousa and a piece of old cheese and taste... If both of them taste the same, then you are doomed.

The joke subverts the expected script of testing for COVID-19 by humorously suggesting that instead of expensive COVID-19 tests and precautions, all that is needed to stay safe is a piece of basbousa (a Middle Eastern sweet) and a piece of

old cheese to taste. It highlights the absurdity of relying on unconventional methods for testing. In other words, it suggests that dealing with the coronavirus is not as complicated as it seems and compares it to tasting a piece of dessert and cheese. There is a conceptual metaphor as eating basbousa and cheese is metaphorically mapped onto the concept of a test for Coronavirus. It regards the physical action of eating these foods as though it were a test to find out if the virus is present or not. The metaphorical mapping in this example is **ontological** because it ascribes the concrete action of eating specific foods to the abstract concept of a diagnostic test. It suggests that consuming basbousa and cheese can somehow provide information about a person's Coronavirus status. In addition, the joke satirizes the difficulties and costs associated with COVID-19 testing, mocking the idea that a simple taste test could serve as a substitute.

٨- احب اشكر ظروف الحظر اللي خلتني اقعد في البيت مع اولادي و اكتشف اني معرفتش اربي

Translation: I would like to thank the circumstances of the lockdown that made me stay at home with my children and discover that I didn't raise them well.

The joke plays with the semantic script of staying at home during lockdown and spending time with one's children. The humor arises from the claim that the person discovered his lack of parenting skills during the quarantine. It is said that many parents spend most of their times at work thinking that all what their kids need is money and other material stuff and they express their care and love to them in this way, forgetting that their essential role is bringing up their children and raising polite children. During the lockdown, they discovered their children's misbehavior. Thus, the joke reflects a shared experience among many parents after staying at home and having the chance to spend more time with their children realizing that they need breeding. The conceptual metaphor in this joke is an **ontological** metaphor in which human-like characteristics are ascribed to abstract concepts. In this example, the metaphorical mapping occurs between the two abstract concept; namely the concept of circumstances and the abstract concept of gratitude. The joke proposes that the speaker has positive feelings towards the circumstances of the lockdown -which is, of course, of an irony-. Moreover, by showing gratitude towards these circumstances, the speaker metaphorically

personifies the circumstances as if they were a caring entity deserving appreciation.

٩-حكمة اليوم " يا ريت لو فيه لفظ خارج ياخذني معاه

Translation: Wisdom of the day: "I wish there was an 'outside word' that would take me out with it."

The joke plays on the expectation that the listener will depend on the literal meaning of the phrase (an outside word) 'لفظ خارج' which means a swear word to understand the joke. In this joke, the humorous twist arises from the literal meaning of the word which is 'outside' and he wishes to go outdoors. The joke reflects a shared experience that many people suffered from during the quarantine as they felt isolated and wanted to go outdoors with no cause. In this joke, the speaker expresses a desire for an outside word that would metaphorically take him with it outdoors, thus, highlighting the feeling of isolation and boredom. This metaphorical mapping suggests desire of the speaker to go outdoors with anyone because of his feeling of isolation during the lockdown. Here, the speaker depends on his intended meaning of the literal meaning of the word. It is an **orientational**.

١٠- ان شاء الله بعد ما نخلص من الكورونا حنقسم نفسنا اربع مجموعات...
الاولي حتروح لدكاترة جلدية علشان تتعالج من آثار الكحول والكلور.
الثانية حتروح لدكاترة نفسيين علشان تتعالج من الاكتئاب.
الثالثة حتروح لأخصائي تغذية علشان مش عارفين يطلعوا من الباب .
الرابعة حتروح للمحاكم علشان تخلص إجراءات الطلاق

Translation: God willing, after we get rid of the coronavirus, we will divide ourselves into four groups.

The first group will go to dermatologists to be treated from the effects of alcohol and chlorine.

The second group will go to psychiatrists to be treated from depression.

The third group will go to nutritionists because they can't fit through the door.

And the fourth group will go to the courts to complete divorce proceedings.

The joke refers to the potential consequences of the pandemic. It presents a script of dividing people into four groups based on their post-pandemic needs, for example, the first group will need dermatologists for alcohol and chlorine effects due to the intensive use of disinfectants, the second group will need psychologists for depression due to the long stay at home, the third group will need nutritionists for weight gain as due to the lockdown and lack of movement many people gained a lot of weight, and the fourth group will need courts for divorce procedures as divorce rates increased during the pandemic due to the lockdown and social distancing many couples spend increased amount of time together. This has, in many cases acted as an agent for break-ups. Therefore, the joke humorously addresses the potential consequences of the pandemic on various aspects of people's lives and the need for different professional services. The joke contains one conceptual metaphor as the expression “they can't fit through the door” is an **orientational** metaphor in which the expression those who can't fit through the door refers to obesity. Here, the metaphor utilizes the spatial concept of fitting through a door to refer to the concept of obesity.

١١- صديق لقيته منزل خبر مفرح وسط الاحداث دي كلها .. عملت له بلوك .. هو دا وقته

Translation: I found a friend who posted good news amid all these events... I blocked him... It is not the right time.

The joke refers to the script of blocking or unfollowing a friend on social media. It humorously suggests that the person blocked his friend precisely when he found that his friend shared good news on social media. Moreover, the joke reflects the humorous nature of social media interactions and the tendency to block or unfollow people at unexpected moments, even when they have good news to share. To block someone nowadays, becomes a modern means of expressing upset or anger towards a friend, particularly in situations where direct communication may be difficult or unwanted. In the past, people may have expressed their dissatisfaction or anger through different means, such as avoiding

or ignoring the person, confronting them face-to-face, or using other means of communication like phone calls or letters. The joke plays on the metaphor of "block" meaning to prevent or hinder someone from doing something. In this context, the speaker metaphorically blocks his friend after sharing good news due to the current situation of COVID-19. In this sentence, the metaphorical mapping occurs between the concrete action of blocking someone (in a digital or social media context) and the abstract concept of (preventing someone from interacting with a friend). This usually happens when someone feels that blocking is the best course of action that can maintain privacy, safety or emotional well-being. It is a **structural** metaphor as it establishes a relationship between two concepts.

١٢- اكتشافات في الأسبوع الأخير
 عدد بلاطات السيراميك في الشقة ٦٢٠ بلطة
 سلك الدش حوالين الحيطان ٩٠ متر
 وزن تراييزة الصالون اقل من وزن كرسي الانتريه بمقدار كبايتين رز
 درج التلاجة بيشيل ٢٠ ليمونه و ٩٠ خياره بالطول او ٥٥ بالعرض
 لقيت ٧ فرد شباشب مالهمش دعوة ببعض

Translation: Discoveries in the past week:

Number of ceramic tiles in the apartment: 620 tiles.

The length of the satellite dish cable: 90 meters.

The weight of the living room table is heavier than the weight of two cups of rice compared to the weight of the sofa.

The refrigerator drawer can hold 20 lemons and 90 cucumbers lengthwise or 55 cucumbers widthwise.

I found 7 pairs of slippers that have nothing to do with each other.

In this joke, the script revolves around the notion of unexpected discoveries or observations related to the quarantine and lockdown. Each line presents a different aspect of the speaker's recent findings, ranging from the number of ceramic tiles in the apartment to the peculiarities of household objects. The punchline highlights the absurdity of the discoveries, because of the free time that people have during the quarantine to the extent to find out all these discoveries. The metaphorical aspect in this joke is primarily **structural**. The script draws on

the conceptual framework of unexpected or surprising findings related to COVID-19 and presents them as humorous observations. The speaker uses exaggerated or incongruous comparisons to highlight the unusual nature of these discoveries, such as comparing the weight of a table to cups of rice or the capacity of a refrigerator drawer to hold lemons and cucumbers. The joke uses orientational metaphorical comparisons between different objects and their quantities and weights, highlighting the relative sizes or amounts of each item. This plays on the metaphor of size and weight in relation to each other.

١٣-يا ريت اللي حيفضل لآخر ٢٠٢٠ يبقي يطفى النور ويتمم علي محبس الغاز ويقفل الباب وراه

Translation: "I wish that whoever remains until the end of 2020 turns off the lights, closes the gas valve, and locks the door behind him."

In this joke, the script revolves around the idea of being the last person still alive at the end of 2020 after many others have died due to coronavirus. It reflects a cultural context where people have experienced the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges and losses and it highlights a feeling of frustration. The humor lies in the dark irony of the situation. The setup implies a request or wish for the person who remains alive to perform certain actions. These actions include turning off the lights, closing the gas valve, and locking the door behind him. These are actions that always people do when they are travelling leaving their home for a long time to maintain safety of the home. The script plays on the notion of the last survivor taking responsibility for these tasks. It is found that the metaphorical aspect of this joke is primarily **ontological**. It frames the experience of living through the COVID-19 pandemic as a journey or passage of time. The concept of "the last one to be alive" is metaphorically understood as reaching the end of this journey. The actions of turning off the lights, closing the gas valve, and locking the door are metaphorical representations of bringing closure to a period of time or event. The joke relies on the metaphor of taking precautions to ensure safety. It suggests that the person who will continue living until the end of 2020 should take extra safety measures.

١٤-قعدت اكلح في الشغل عشان يمشوني بدري.. مشوني خالص

Translation:

"I pretended to cough at work so they would let me leave early... They dismissed me."

In this joke, the script revolves around the concept of coughing at work with the expectation of leaving early. The setup expresses the speaker's intention of coughing (as a sign of being sick) at work, hoping that he would be allowed to leave early. However, the punchline subverts this expectation by saying that they fired him. The script plays on the anticipation of a certain outcome and the humorous twist of that outcome was more than expected. The metaphorical aspect in this joke frames the act of coughing at work as a strategy to achieve a desired outcome, which is leaving early. The conceptual metaphor in this expression is **orientational**. It involves expressing how the work is boring and bureaucratic by the mapping of physical symptoms or actions through coughing onto the concept of strategic maneuvering or achieving a desired outcome. It allows for the expression of a lighthearted or humorous perspective on a situation where someone may use a physical symptom as a means to achieve a particular result which was not successfully done as he wished.

١٥- محتاره البس ايه بكره وانا خارجة للرسبشن

Translation:

"I don't know what to wear tomorrow while I am going out to the reception area".

In this joke, the script revolves around the concept of getting ready to go out and choosing an outfit. It plays on the humorous unexpected twist that the speaker wants to go out as he/she gets bored from staying at home during the lockdown, however, the humor arises in the punchline subverting the expectation that it is the reception area at home that the speaker is going to, not outdoors. The script plays on the contrast between the speaker's initial assumption of a formal occasion outdoors and the reality of a more relaxed environment indoors at the reception. The metaphorical aspect of this joke is primarily **structural**. It frames the act of choosing an outfit as a preparation for an outgoing event. The concept of "going to the reception area" is metaphorically understood as attending a formal

gathering or meeting. The punchline subverts this metaphorical expectation by suggesting that the reception area is not a formal event to wear an outfit, highlighting the humorous contrast between the speaker's assumptions and the reality.

١٦- واحد صاحبنا من كتر قعدته في البيت مع مراته حبها و عرض عليها الزواج

Translation:

"Our friend, due to spending a long time at home with his wife, falls in love with her and proposes to marry her."

In this joke, the script revolves around the concept of a person spending a lot of time at home with his spouse during a period of quarantine. Due to spending this long time with her, a feeling of love with her was developed. The punchline subverts the expectation by indicating that the friend proposes to marry his wife, despite already being married to her. The script plays on the absurdity of proposing marriage to someone who is already married to, highlighting the humorous twist. The metaphorical aspect of this joke is primarily structural. It frames the act of proposing marriage as an expression of deep love and commitment due to the extended time spent together between the husband and wife as if they were strangers and they get to know each other. The joke mocks the excessive time spent at home during the COVID-19 pandemic as if it were a romantic relationship leading to falling in love and proposing marriage to his already-married wife. The **ontological** metaphor attributes the abstract concept of falling in love and proposing marriage to the concrete action of spending time with the wife. It allows for a playful and exaggerated representation of the impact of spending time together on the dynamics of a relationship.

9. Results and Findings

Based on the analysis of the American and Egyptian jokes provided above, several findings can be observed:

9.1. First: The Frequency of the Types of Conceptual Metaphors Used

The following table represents a comparison of the frequency of the types of conceptual metaphors used in both American and Egyptian jokes.

	Structural	Frequency	Ontological	Frequency	Oriental	Frequency	No rely on metaphors	Frequency	Total
American jokes	4	25%	6	37.5%	4	25%	2	12.5%	16
Egyptian jokes	4	25%	8	50%	3	19%	1	6%	16

Table (1): The frequency of the types of conceptual metaphor used

According to the previous table, it is noticed that ontological metaphor is the most frequently used both in American (37.5%) and Egyptian jokes (50%), whereas structural and orientational metaphors are less used. The frequent use of ontological metaphors can be indicative of several factors. First, it draws upon everyday human experiences and emotions, making them relatable and easily understandable to a wide audience. Given the widespread impact of COVID-19 and the shared experiences of people during the pandemic, ontological metaphors provide a common ground for humor. Second, ontological metaphors often tap into deep emotions and human relationships, allowing jokes to evoke empathy, amusement, or even purgation. According to the provided jokes, it is noted that the use of ontological metaphors addresses the emotional aspects of the pandemic, such as fear, anxiety, or frustration. Another important factor concerning ontological metaphors is that they simplify complex concepts or situations by using familiar objects or relationships as seen in the provided examples above. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about numerous intricate and challenging circumstances, and using ontological metaphors helps to make them more accessible and easier to grasp in a joke.

In respect to structural and orientational metaphors, it is found that they are less used in the provided jokes due to their abstract nature or the need for a more subtle understanding of the underlying concepts. Structural metaphors involve mapping one domain onto another, while orientational metaphors relate to spatial orientation and directionality. These two types of metaphors may call for a deeper level of analysis or understanding with the specific domains being mapped, thus resulting in making them less suitable for quick, lighthearted jokes.

9.2. Second: The Cultural Differences of American and Egyptian through the Use of Conceptual Metaphors

The following table (2) represents the conceptual metaphors in the American jokes

The conceptual metaphor	Target domain	Source domain
Humans are dogs	humans	dogs
Washing hands is the customary tradition of celebrating birthday	Washing hands	Celebrating birthday
Throwing a dart is like selecting a travel destination	Throwing a dart	Selecting travel destination
Lying in bed is like saving the world	Lying in bed	Saving the world
Social distancing is like buttons on a shirt that are far apart	Social distancing	Far apart buttons of a shirt
A talkative child is an insane parrot	Talkative child	Insane parrot
Quarantine is making inside jokes	Quarantine	Inside jokes
Attributing human-like understanding to animals	Human-like understanding	Animals

Relaxing on a coach is a tense	Relaxing on a coach	A tense
Attributing human emotions and thoughts to animals	Human emotion and thoughts	Animals
Bathroom scale is a person	Bathroom scale	Person responding
Mental act of deciding what outfit to wear is like having control and choice during lockdown	Deciding what outfit to wear	Having control and choice during lockdown
Eating raw garlic is a social distance measure	Eating raw garlic	Social distance measures
A COVID-19 joke is a tasteless food	A COVID-19 joke	A tasteless food

The following table (3) represents the conceptual metaphors in the Egyptian jokes

The conceptual metaphor	Target domain	Source domain
The concept of time as a physical entity that can be measured by washing hands for 20 seconds	The concept of time as a physical entity	Washing hands for 20 seconds
Attributing human characteristics to the virus	Attributing human characteristics	Virus
Wearing a mask is a disguise	Wearing a mask	Disguise
Clothing is a symbol of social activity	Clothing	Social activity
Evaluation of medical test results is an evaluation of character traits	Evaluation of medical test results	An evaluation of character traits

Eating specific foods is a diagnostic test	Eating specific foods (Basbousa and cheese)	Diagnostic test
Attributing human-like qualities to the concept of circumstances	Circumstances	person
The expression can't fit through the door means obesity	The expression can't fit through the door	obesity
Blocking is preventing interaction	The concrete action of blocking	Preventing interaction
Free time leads to discoveries	Free time	Discoveries
Life during COVID-19 pandemic is a journey	Life during COVID-19 pandemic	Journey
Coughing is a strategic maneuvering to achieve an outcome	Physical symptoms or actions (coughing)	Strategic maneuvering to achieve an outcome
Choosing an outfit is a preparation for a social event or activity outdoor	Choosing an outfit	A preparation for a social event or activity outdoor
The abstract concept of falling in love is spending time with the wife	The abstract concept of falling in love	Spending time with the wife

As shown from the above two tables, it is noticed that the conceptual metaphors used in the American and Egyptian jokes reflect cultural differences in the way these metaphors are constructed and understood. The metaphors in the American jokes, on the one hand, reflect cultural affinity towards pets and the use of animals as metaphors for human behavior is a distinguishing feature. Moreover, the rest of metaphors are related to personal experiences and emotions during quarantine. In addition, other metaphors draw on everyday objects such as buttons of a shirt or a bathroom scale. Overall, the metaphors used in American jokes

reflect situations in American culture. The metaphors in Egyptian jokes, on the other hand, attribute human characteristics or emotions to abstract concepts like time, circumstances and the virus itself. This reflects a cultural inclination towards personification. Moreover, there are also metaphors related to clothing and food to symbolize social activities which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and the use of food as cultural reference in Egyptian society. In addition, using metaphors that are related to spending time with a spouse reflect a cultural emphasis on family and relationships. Accordingly, the differences between conceptual metaphors in American and Egyptian jokes reflect the cultural perspectives of each society, highlighting the unique ways in which humor is expressed in both societies.

9.3. Third: The Utilization of the Semantic Script Theory of Humor

Applying the Semantic Script Theory of Humor on the collected data of the American jokes, it is found that the provided jokes subvert social scripts and introduce humorous alternatives. The established social script for humans during quarantine in these jokes involve staying at home, practicing social distancing, and adapting to a more restricted lifestyle. Most of the jokes compare between one of these situations with an unexpected situation. They subvert expectations, rely on shared experiences, and employ exaggeration to create humor. By highlighting the similarities between the two situations, a humor is created. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the shared cultural knowledge plays a significant role in understanding the jokes as they have strong cultural references and they rely on shared cultural, experiences, and norms to create humor. These references include cultural expectations, societal beliefs, everyday situations, customs, traditions, or stereotypes. These cultural references allow the reader to recognize the nuances, meanings, and humor embedded within these references, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of jokes and their cultural significance.

Similarly, the Egyptian jokes also rely on the Semantic Script Theory of Humor, subverting social scripts and introducing humorous alternatives. The

jokes reflect a cultural understanding of hygiene and cleanliness, public awareness, the importance of wearing masks, and the significance of test results as a form of evaluation. These jokes tap into shared cultural knowledge and experiences, making them relatable to Egyptian readers. Moreover, the humor in these jokes arises from unexpected twists or contrasts between expected and actual behaviors or outcomes. The unexpected elements create surprise and amusement for the reader, highlighting the incongruity or irony in the situations presented. The jokes are rooted in the cultural context of Egypt, referencing specific cultural practices, beliefs, or shared experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on daily life. They reflect the unique perspectives and coping mechanisms of Egyptians during this time.

According to these findings, it can be said that they indicate that the jokes serve as a form of cultural expression, enabling both Americans and Egyptians to find humor and make sense of their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. They provide a means of communication, reflection, and commentary on various aspects of life and society amidst difficult circumstances.

9.4. Fourth: Topics and Themes of the Jokes:

Upon examining the topics or themes of the jokes, it is found that both American and Egyptian jokes cover a variety of themes. The American jokes, on the one hand, cover themes such as daily life during quarantine such as house cleaning, parenting and children, weight gain, fashion choices, health measures, and homeschooling besides psychological factors such as emotional eating, pet interaction during quarantine, stress relief, and other topics such as travel plans and productivity during quarantine.

The topics of the Egyptian jokes, on the other hand, involve different aspects of life such as public awareness and health guidance, parenting and children, predictions about post-pandemic scenarios, coping mechanisms and social media interaction during the quarantine, and expressing frustration. According to the topics covered, it is noted that both American and Egyptian jokes share some

common topics that are related to health measures, parenting and children, expression of frustration and coping mechanisms. The choice of these topics allows the jokes to tap into various aspects of human experiences, cultural references, and shared knowledge. They draw on familiar scenarios, social norms, and common understandings to create humor through unexpected twists, incongruity, and subversion of expectations.

10. Conclusion:

Overall, this study highlights the techniques and strategies employed in both American and Egyptian jokes to create humor. The jokes tend to use different techniques ranging from semantic scripts to cultural contexts, shared experiences, and conceptual metaphors to create humor. All these factors play significant roles in generating laughter. It demonstrates the importance of surprise, exaggeration, metaphorical connections, and cultural context in generating humorous effect and engaging the reader's sense of amusement. It is obvious that all the jokes rely on the Semantic Script Theory of Humor, which involves subverting social scripts of expectations to create humor. Many jokes rely on the deviation from established social norms, such as unexpected behavior or situations. This indicates that humor often arises from contrast, surprise, and the violation of expected patterns.

In addition, the majority of jokes invoke conceptual metaphors of different kinds ranging from ontological to structural and orientational metaphors. The reliance on conceptual metaphors is obvious as the utilization of semantic scripts. Moreover, different topics and themes are covered in the collected data of the jokes as they cover a variety of aspects of human experiences, cultural references, and shared knowledge that most Americans and Egyptians know. These topics range from everyday situations (hygiene, wearing masks), social issues (public awareness, lockdown), cultural references (ancient Egyptian beliefs), and interactions with professionals (doctors, medical tests).

Finally, it can be said that American humor, on the one hand, draws on a wide range of societal norms and behaviors, and often employs cultural knowledge and shared experiences. Egyptian jokes, on the other hand, draw heavily on cultural

references, as well as social and historical issues. It tends to be more focused on wordplay and irony. However, the common factor in both American and Egyptian jokes is the anxieties and difficulties of living through a pandemic which are clearly reflected in the jokes.

List of Abbreviations

Semantic-Script Theory	SSTH
Conceptual Metaphor Theory	CM
General Theory of Verbal Humor	GTVH
Ontological Semantic Theory of Humor	OSTH
Language	LA
Narrative Strategy	NS
Target	TA
Situation	SI
The Logical Mechanism	LM
Script Opposition	SO
Knowledge Resources	KR

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