



Linguistic and Semiotic Analysis of Memes with English and Arabic Humor Captions

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Abstract: This study aimed to examine memes from a linguistic and cultural perspective, focusing on humor expressed through English and Arabic captions in memes collected from Facebook and Instagram. Using a mixed-method approach that combined quantitative and qualitative methods, corpus linguistics was employed to collect 60 memes—30 Arabic and 30 English. The study sought to highlight the similarities and differences in the methods used to express humor through memes while examining the socio-semiotic aspects underlying their linguistic and cultural structure. Drawing on Halliday's socio-semiotic theory, the analysis was conducted at three levels: ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, described in terms of the situational context through the variables of field, tenor, and mode. The findings revealed that mode was the most frequently used semiotic metafunction across the four sub-corpora, represented by ellipsis, exophoric and anaphoric references, conjunction, lexical collocation, and repetition. Linguistic features of mode were more prominent in Instagram English memes and Facebook Arabic memes. Tenor emerged as the second most used metafunction, particularly in Facebook Arabic memes and Instagram English memes, expressed through mood, polarity, modality, and dialogue. Conversely, field, encompassing themes such as social commentary, relationships, and politics, was the least used metafunction, with no significant differences among its sub-corpora. The study concludes that memes are a complex socio-semiotic phenomenon where linguistic and visual elements interact to communicate meaning. It recommends further research on cross-platform memes and longitudinal analyses to explore evolving linguistic and cultural dynamics.

Keywords: Linguistic Analysis of Memes, Cultural Semiotics in Memes, Social Media Memes Research, Halliday's Socio-Semiotic Theory, Humor in English and Arabic Memes, Visual and Linguistic Communication, Semiotic Metafunctions in Memes

1. Introduction

The current study examines memes from a linguistic and cultural perspective, focusing on memes with English and Arabic captions obtained from Facebook and Instagram. It posits that memes are an effective communication tool, facilitating interaction between meme creators and the internet community. The study adopts Halliday's (1975) socio-semiotic theory to explore the linguistic and cultural dimensions of memes, particularly their role as a mode of communication (e.g., text and images) expressing various speech registers (e.g., humor and satire). This research aims to investigate the socio-semiotics behind memes' complex verbal and visual structures and to address the gap in understanding how the meaning of memes is created and communicated using Halliday's (1975) socio-semiotic framework.

The term "meme" was first introduced by Richard Dawkins (1976) in his book *The Selfish Gene*, drawing an analogy between the biological concept of a gene and the replication and transmission of cultural phenomena. Dawkins suggested that memes, like genes, spread through copying and imitation, acting as cultural units transmitted among individuals via various communication mediums. Memes hold significance as they provide a creative way for internet culture to combine humor and messages (Wang & Wang, 2015). Consequently, digital memes, which vary across contexts, can be effectively analyzed through the lens of social semiotics.

Semiotics, as the study of sign systems, offers valuable insights into memes beyond other approaches. Unlike linguistics, semiotics focuses on the signification and communication of both intentional and unintentional meanings. Derived from the Ancient Greek term *semeion* (sign), semiotics explores the relationship between signs and meaning (Saussure, 1916). The foundation of semiotics can be traced back to early thinkers like Plato and Aristotle. However, Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) is regarded as the father of semiology, laying the groundwork for the field by defining the relationship between the *signifier* (the physical form of the sign, such as sounds, letters, or gestures) and the *signified* (the concept or image it represents). The connection between these two elements is referred to as "signification" (Sebeok, 2001). Saussure described semiotics as "a science that studies the life of signs within society" (Saussure, 1916). Social semiotics, the focus of this study, builds upon Saussure's concepts, examining the social relations and power dynamics that shape communication codes.

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Previous studies have highlighted memes' critical role as a communication form on social media, emphasizing the embedded meanings they convey. These studies often analyze memes using semiotic frameworks, such as Barthes' theory of semiotics, which interprets memes as signs with culturally specific meanings (Kavitha, 2018; Bardakis, 2021; Lestari, Duwila, & Probowati, 2022). Others employ cognitive semiotics to show how memes consist of text superimposed on images, forming part of image macros (Zenner & Geeraerts, 2018). Some researchers conduct meta-semiotic analyses, uncovering the ideological functions of visual images and the cultural understanding of respondents (Octavita & Zaimar, 2019; Hakoköngäs, Halmesvaara, & Sakki, 2020; Alcantara & Yocampo, 2022). However, the social justification behind internet memes as a communication code remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by applying Halliday's (1975) socio-semiotic theory to analyze how memes convey meaning through their verbal and visual structures.

Michael Halliday (1975) introduced the concept of "social semiotics" in his book *Language as Social Semiotic*, emphasizing the growing importance of pictorial images in communication. Halliday's framework provides a robust foundation for analyzing memes as a form of communication that simplifies interaction between creators and internet users. Building on this theory, the present study examines memes as a medium of communication that expresses humor and satire in English and Arabic captions sourced from Facebook and Instagram.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does Halliday's (1975) semiotic interaction manifest in Facebook and Instagram humor memes in Arabic and English?
2. How does Halliday's (1975) linguistic interaction manifest in Facebook and Instagram humor memes in Arabic and English?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Memes

According to Kavitha (2018), memes do not have a singular form; they can be images, emails, or even video files. However, most memes are images of people or animals captioned with humorous sayings. The term "meme" was first introduced by Richard Dawkins to explain the spread of cultural information, with internet memes being a subset of this broader concept specific to the culture and environment of the internet. Kavitha (2018: 220) highlights that "image macros" are one of the most common forms of internet memes. Kariko (2013) emphasizes that internet users generate meanings in memes based on a theme or image, often adding humor or fun. This process requires creativity in utilizing symbols, words, and contexts to convey meaning.

Shifman (2013, p. 363) states, "The word meme is derived from the Greek *mimema*, signifying something which is imitated." Similarly, Taecharungroj and Nueangjammong (2015) describe memes as tools for generating laughter, and representing humor on the internet and social media. Shifman (2014: 41) further refines the definition, describing memes as "a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance that (a) were created with some awareness of each other; and (b) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the internet by multiple users."

Grundlingh (2017, p. 4) describes memes as a popular method of online communication, often used by internet users to interact on social networking sites and forums. Grundlingh notes that "the interpretation of a meme can therefore be seen as a process of signification [...] both semiotics and pragmatics assist in contributing to a thorough understanding of how memes are used to communicate." Pauliks (2020, p. 46) adds that when hearing the word "meme," most people think of amusing images and videos found on the internet.

Ibnu Sulhar (2016), in his study *Internet Meme Analysis: Interpretive Semiotic Analysis on 'Scumbag Steve'*, examined the denotations and connotations of "Scumbag Steve" memes using Barthes' semiology theory. Sulhar analyzed these memes in the context of modern myths, emphasizing their use in communication beyond entertainment. Similarly, Made Nunik Sayani (2013), in *Semiotic Analysis of Memes in 9gag.com*, analyzed the "Poker Face" and "Okay" memes through Saussure's and Chandler's semiotic theories. Sayani's research focused on the signifiers and signifieds of the memes, illustrating how posts with memes have varied functions and meanings depending on their cultural and linguistic contexts.

2.2. Socio-Cultural Analysis of Memes

Gunawat and Kapoor (2023) explored people's awareness of meme culture and the information they share about cultural memes. Using a quantitative methodology and an online survey, the study concluded that memes significantly contribute to providing different perspectives on the world and fostering discussions among people.

Dwivedi (2023) examined the impact of social media memes on cross-cultural communication, emphasizing how memes have transformed communication across cultures and facilitated globalization through social media. The study found that 50% of people worldwide are influenced by internet memes.

Wang (2024) analyzed the rise and development of "network terrier culture" in the context of media integration. Wang's research highlights the emergence of meme culture as a social phenomenon, exploring its impacts

and its role as a cultural indicator. The study provides insights into managing and utilizing language as a cultural phenomenon.

Mukhtar et al. (2024) examined the sociological characteristics of memes in relation to their occurrence on online platforms. The researchers collected and analyzed memes based on “themes, linguistic elements, and cultural references” (p. 1443) from various internet sources. The findings revealed that memes reflect societal trends, generational differences, and cultural dynamics. According to Mukhtar et al. (2024), memes serve as “potent vehicles for social connection, self-expression, and cultural commentary within digital communities” (p. 1443).

2.3. Linguistic and Semiotic Analysis of Memes

Kavitha (2018) conducted a study titled “*A Study of Memes Using Semiotics*” to analyze internet memes using a qualitative approach. The samples were taken from the *Whatsapp Kalakkal* page of Tamil *The Hindu* newspaper. Only the image macro meme format was selected to identify the popular memes among digital users.

Thomas Bardakis (2021) explored Greek Internet memes in his study, “*A Semiotic Approach to Greek Internet Memes During the COVID-19 Pandemic*.” Using a qualitative approach, Bardakis analyzed 15 memes related to COVID-19 and lockdowns, which were presented on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The humorous memes were examined in the context of Greek culture, quarantine discourse, and pandemic realities. One notable finding was that these memes exaggerated the pandemic and lockdown realities to generate humor. Bardakis (2021, p. 42) stated that the memes “reflect the people’s weariness, psychological fatigue, and frustration at prolonging the government’s strict measures.”

In “*Semiotics Study on Skripsi’s Memes*,” Lestari et al. (2022) applied Roland Barthes’ semiotic theory to analyze memes addressing Skripsi’s writing challenges. The researchers used a qualitative approach to select five memes from Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, digital news media, and the web. Their analysis revealed that the memes communicated both denotative and connotative meanings, highlighting students’ difficulties with Skripsi’s writing.

Eline Zenner and Dirk Geeraerts (2024, p. 167) examined image macros, a subgenre of internet memes, through a cognitive-linguistic lens. They described internet memes as “all kinds of online objects that are copied and imitated, altered and modified, propagated and diffused by participants on the web.” Their study aimed to define image macros by capturing the interplay between conventionality and creativity while exploring the processing difficulties posed by traditional wordplay in image macros (ibid., 176). This research opened up new avenues for studying this often-overlooked yet highly popular subgenre of internet memes.

From these previous studies, it becomes evident that there is a shortage of research addressing the similarities and differences in how humor is expressed through memes on Facebook and Instagram. Additionally, the exploration of memes from both linguistic and cultural perspectives remains underdeveloped.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Data Collection and Processing

This study adopts a mixed-method approach to analyze the socio-semiotic features of English and Arabic memes shared on Facebook and Instagram. Quantitative analysis was conducted to identify linguistic and non-linguistic features in memes, providing a robust foundation for the analysis through Halliday’s (1975) social semiotics framework. Frequency analysis was also utilized to examine differences in linguistic features and other meme characteristics, albeit on a small-scale sample. Future research should compile larger corpora for frequency-based analysis to better understand socio-semiotic patterns in memes.

Data were randomly collected from Facebook and Instagram, focusing on humor memes in English and Arabic. The sample consisted of four subcategories: English Facebook memes, Arabic Facebook memes, English Instagram memes, and Arabic Instagram memes, with 15 memes in each category (a total of 60 memes). Memes were categorized into text memes, picture-text memes, video memes with spoken dialogue, and video memes with text but no spoken dialogue. Although the selection was random, it was systematic, as memes were chosen based on their popularity (likes) on the platforms, prioritizing the funniest ones.

To ensure validity and reliability, data were coded (see appendices). Memes were classified according to Halliday’s (1975) framework, beginning with an analysis of semiotic features of situations (non-linguistic features) and semantics (linguistic features).

- **Situational Semiotics:** Represented through three dimensions—field, tenor, and mode—and analyzed top-down.
- **Semantic Semiotics:** Analyzed through three functional units—ideational (about something), interpersonal (doing something), and textual (text-forming potential)—using a bottom-up approach.

The socio-semiotic interaction analysis included linguistic analysis of meme captions to identify various linguistic features. Subsequently, a semantic analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between captions and

visual elements, determining whether images reinforced, contradicted, or added layers of meaning. Cultural references emerged from the interaction of language and images, enriching the contextual understanding. Additional semiotic features, such as font size, colors, capitalization, and punctuation, were examined for their impact on emphasis and tone.

Analyzing diverse meme formats (e.g., static images, GIFs, short videos) posed challenges due to their variability. The transient nature of memes, driven by real-time events and cultural shifts, further complicated sample collection and representation. Thus, the study is limited to the selected memes analyzed in this research.

3.2. Theoretical Foundation: Halliday (1975) Socio-Semiotic Theory

Social semiotics, a branch of semiotics, examines the meaning-making processes of signs and symbols. It draws from structuralist semiotics founded by Ferdinand de Saussure (1916). Halliday (1975) coined the term “social semiotics” to emphasize the interplay between language, context, and social structure in creating meaning. He argued against the conventional separation of language and society, advocating for an integrated approach that considers text, context, and social interaction.

Halliday viewed language as a culturally dependent system of signs that cannot be fully understood outside its social context. His socio-semiotic framework highlights systems of “meaning potential” shaped by cultural and social influences (Halliday, 1975, p. 269). This framework is central to the present study and is summarized in Table 1 (see appendices).

Table 1: Determination of semantic features by elements of semiotic structures of situation

	Situational	Semantic	
Field	Manipulation of objects	Process type and participant structure	Ideational
	Assistance of adult	Benefactive	
	Movable objects and fixtures	Type of relevant object	
	Movability of objects & their relation to fixtures	Type of location and movement	
	Recall of similar events	Past time	
	Evaluation	Modulation	
Tenor	Interaction with parent	Person	Interpersonal
	Determination of course of action	Mood and polarity	
	Enunciation of intention	Demand, ‘I want to’	
	Control of action	Demand, ‘I want you to’	
	Sharing of experience	Statement/question, monologue	
Mode	Seeking corroboration of experience	Statement/question, dialogue	Textual
	Dialogue	Ellipsis (question–answer)	
	Reference to situation	Exophoric reference	
	Textual cohesion: objects	Anaphoric reference	
	Textual cohesion: processes	Conjunction	
	Furthering child’s actions	Theme (in conjunction with transitivity and mood; typically, parent or child in demands, child in two-participant statements, object in one-participant statements)	
	Orientation to task	Lexical collocation and repetition	
Spoken mode	Information structure		

Note: Adopted from *Language as Social Semiotic* by M. A. Halliday. 1993 [1975], *Language and Literacy* (267), ed. by J. Maybin, Clevedon: Open University.

According to Halliday (1975, p. 263), language comprises a system that affects how the speaker utilizes the language in a particular social context. Such a system consists of “linguistic interaction in which people engage” and “semiotic interaction,” which is “not only the text (what people mean) but also the semantic system (what they can mean).” The former system exemplified in “text” has three primary purposes, or “metafunctions,” as referred to in the model. Thus, the grammar of the language has one of these functions: (i) represents the speaker’s idea about the world (ideational), (ii) represents the speaker’s meaning potential (interpersonal), and (iii) represents the speaker’s text-forming potential (textual).

As for the latter system exemplified in “The Situation,” three main dimensions represent the semiotic structure of a situation type. These are (i) “field” (what) – the social activity in which the text is surrounded; (ii) “tenor” (who) – the role relationships involved among the relevant participants; and (iii) mode (how) – the channel or the medium that is selected, whether spoken or written (ibid., 266). The aforementioned “two semiotic modes complement and supplement each other to add to the denotation and connotation of the discourse” (Xu 2012, p. 154). The critical implication here is that social reality constructs meaning and results in what Halliday calls a semiotic construct, in which the human power of interpretation and signification (known as semiosis) shapes individuals and societies.

Other frameworks can be applied to the chosen memes. However, the researchers preferred Halliday's socio-semiotic (1975) approach, which provides meaningful insights into the complexities of political discourse expressed through memes. The model employed multimodal analysis, which enables a richer analysis of how different modes of communication interact to convey critical messages. Therefore, it is considered a convenient tool to uncover the underlying ideologies and power dynamics of political discourse expressed through memes.

4. Results

4.1. Memes Through the Lens of Semantics as Social Semiotics

This section discusses the results related to systematic functional linguistics, which is regarded as a feature of all languages. The orientation of such a property is considered functional and semantic rather than syntactic and formal. In other words, the functional-oriented approach to linguistics argues that language should be described based on the purpose that it serves rather than its syntactic and grammatical function. Accordingly, all languages should be explained through functions, namely, "the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions" (Halliday, 1975, p. 263). The following subsections present the results of each function, including its subtypes, based on Halliday's (1975) framework of Socio-Semiotic Theory:

4.1.1. Ideational

Following Halliday's framework of socio-semiotic analysis, the researchers conducted a frequency analysis of the corpora collected from Facebook and Instagram. Each corpus comprised English and Arabic subsections representing various humor memes randomly collected from the respective social media platforms. Ideational, which denotes the broader social context within which the text operates, was analyzed alongside the subject matter and considered a specific manifestation within this context. In this case, the semantic feature of ideation was analyzed through the elements of semiotic structures of the situation, referred to as the field. Each sub-corpus contained a selection of memes contributing to the overall analysis. The findings revealed that these memes covered three themes: social commentary, relationships, and politics.

Table 2: Frequency of occurrences by ideational in English and Arabic memes on Facebook and Instagram

Ideational (Field)	Facebook (English)	Facebook (Arabic)	Instagram (English)	Instagram (Arabic)
Social Commentary	9	10	11	12
Relationships	6	7	5	5
Politics	0	0	1	0

Source: Calculated by the author

Table 2 provides the frequency of occurrences related to the different fields of social commentary, relationships, and politics found across the four sub-corpora. Social commentary appears to be the dominant theme across the four sub-corpora. In Facebook memes, this field recorded approximately nine and ten occurrences in the English and Arabic Facebook corpora, respectively. The analysis shows similar results of occurrences in the English and Arabic Instagram sub-corpora, where they recorded 11 and 12 occurrences, respectively. The relationships field came in second with six and seven occurrences in the English and Arabic Facebook sub-corpora, respectively. Conversely, the same field recorded fewer occurrences in the Instagram sub-corpora, happening approximately five times in both the English and Arabic Instagram sub-corpora. Finally, politics appears to be the least used theme in the sample corpora, recording only one instance in the English Instagram sub-corpus.

4.1.2. Interpersonal

Interpersonal semantics is concerned with how language users construct or maintain proper relationships with others within a society. According to Halliday (1975), users of language build up and take a position in social relationships through interpersonal metafunctions. The analysis of the data reveals that there are semantic components constructed in interpersonal meaning that are realized by elements of semiotic structures of situations, referred to as tenors. These include mood (declarative, question, and imperative), polarity (negative particle and lexical), modality (deontic and epistemic), and dialogue (statement/statement and statement/question). Table 3 below presents the frequency of the four semantic features of interpersonal metafunctions in terms of tenor:

Table 3: Frequency of occurrences by interpersonal in English and Arabic memes on Facebook and Instagram

Interpersonal (Tenor)	Types	Facebook (English)	Facebook (Arabic)	Instagram (English)	Instagram (Arabic)
Mood	Declarative	10	8	10	12
	Question	2	1	1	1
	Imperative	0	3	1	0
Polarity	Negative particle	4	4	7	0
	Negative lexical	3	8	4	1
Modality	Deontic	2	5	3	0
	Epistemic	2	0	4	0

Dialogue	Statement/state- ment	0	4	1	1
	Statement/ques- tion	2	2	3	1

Source: Calculated by the author

As shown in Table 3 above, mood, in all its forms, appears to be the prevailing interpersonal metafunction used across the four sub-corpora. In Facebook memes, the declarative mood in English and Arabic corpora recorded 10 and eight occurrences, respectively. Similarly, the moods recorded almost the same occurrences, with 10 and 12 instances in the English and Arabic Instagram sub-corpora, respectively. The data also reveal that the question mood registered the second-highest frequency. Regarding Facebook memes, the question mood recorded two occurrences in English and one in the Arabic Facebook corpora. At the same time, only one instance appeared in both the English and Arabic Instagram sub-corpora. Likewise, the imperative mood recorded zero and three occurrences in the English and Arabic Facebook corpora, respectively. However, only one instance was registered in the English Instagram sub-corpus, with zero instances in its Arabic counterpart.

Polarity, in both its types (negative particle and lexical), ranked second in occurrences. Regarding Facebook memes, the results showed that memes with negative particle polarity recorded the same frequency, with four occurrences in both the English and Arabic Facebook corpora. However, the same type of polarity recorded seven occurrences in the English Instagram sub-corpus and no occurrences in its Arabic counterpart. On the other hand, the data showed that negative lexical polarity registered three and eight occurrences in the English and Arabic Facebook corpora, respectively. Nevertheless, negative lexical polarity registered fewer occurrences in the English and Arabic Instagram sub-corpora, with four occurrences in English and one in Arabic.

Deontic and epistemic modality is the third interpersonal feature in frequency, following mood and polarity. Considering Facebook corpora, deontic modality recorded two and five instances in the English and Arabic Facebook corpora, respectively. Nevertheless, the same type of modality recorded fewer occurrences in the Instagram sub-corpora, with only three instances in the English Instagram sub-corpus and none in the Arabic Instagram sub-corpus. Regarding epistemic modality, only two instances were recorded in English and none in Arabic. On the other hand, the data revealed four instances in the English Instagram sub-corpus and none in the Arabic Instagram sub-corpus.

The fourth and final type of interpersonal semantic feature is dialogue, whether in the form of statement/statement or statement/question dialogue. In Facebook memes, statement/statement dialogue showed no occurrences in English and only four instances in the Arabic Facebook corpora. In Instagram memes, statement/statement dialogue recorded the same frequency, with only one instance in both the English and Arabic Instagram corpora. However, statement/question dialogue scores were slightly higher, with two equal occurrences in both the English and Arabic Facebook corpora. Meanwhile, the statement/question dialogue recorded three instances in the English Instagram sub-corpus and one instance in its Arabic counterpart.

4.1.3. Textual

To conduct the linguistic analysis of these memes, the researchers examined the linguistic features manifested in the corpora of memes. The textual analysis in the current research examined six linguistic features: ellipsis, exophoric reference, anaphoric reference, conjunction, lexical collocation, and repetition, to show the differences between memes in English and Arabic. To perform the analysis, the researchers extracted the textual information, written or spoken, and analyzed the language used, focusing on the six features previously highlighted in the methods section. The association between the language used in those memes is demonstrated in relation to mode as one of the elements of semiotic structures of the situation, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Frequency of occurrences by textual in English and Arabic memes on Facebook and Instagram

Textual (Mode)	Facebook (English)	Facebook (Arabic)	Instagram (English)	Instagram (Arabic)
Ellipsis	5	3	8	3
Exophoric reference	6	1	9	0
Anaphoric reference	6	27	21	14
Conjunction	11	22	15	11
Lexical collocation	0	0	6	0
Repetition	6	14	20	4

Source: Calculated by the author

Table 4 provides a comprehensive list of the frequencies of the semantic features used in the four sub-corpora of English and Arabic memes on Facebook and Instagram. A glance at the results in the table suggests that the textual features used in these memes vary. The data analysis revealed that textual reference (anaphora) and situational reference (exophora) are the most common textual features in the four sub-corpora. As indicated in the results, the anaphoric reference appears six and 27 times in English and Arabic Facebook memes, respectively.

Similarly, anaphoric references registered almost the same occurrences in Instagram memes, with 21 and 14 occurrences in English and Arabic memes, respectively.

Exophoric reference, however, comes second in terms of frequency. It recorded six occurrences in English Facebook memes and one occurrence in Arabic Facebook memes. However, it registered nine occurrences in English Instagram memes, with zero occurrences in its Arabic counterpart.

Following the references, conjunctions rank second in terms of frequency. Regarding Facebook memes, different conjunctions appear 11 and 22 times in English and Arabic memes, respectively. Similarly, conjunctions registered 15 and 11 instances in English and Arabic Instagram memes, respectively. Subsequently, repetition emerges as the third most frequent textual feature. The data analysis shows that six and 14 instances of repetition appear in English and Arabic Facebook memes, respectively. Comparatively, Instagram memes registered a slightly higher frequency, with 20 instances in English memes and four instances in Arabic memes.

Nevertheless, ellipses registered fewer occurrences across all English and Arabic sub-corpora. It recorded five and three occurrences on Facebook in English and Arabic, respectively. At the same time, it showed higher occurrences in the Instagram sub-corpora, with eight and three instances in English and Arabic memes, respectively.

5. Discussion

5.1. Memes Through the Lens of Situation as Social Semiotics

The representation of memes in this study aims to establish the semantic system of language “as a kind of symbol or a kind of symbolic system and share the same understanding of the essential characteristics of culture” (Long & He, 2021, p. 1269). In other words, the language system of memes is realized through the system of social context. The humor in memes has its own distinctive structures that align with the social purposes they fulfill within the culture in which they are used. Therefore, the context of the situation (i.e., register) is one of the most critical aspects influencing the linguistic realization of humor in memes.

The context of the situation comprises three main variables that fundamentally define the language choices that are made. These variables function collectively and are responsible for shaping the language features within the text. Accordingly, the semantic features of memes, exemplified as “ideational,” “interpersonal,” and “textual,” are described by Halliday (1975, p. 266) in terms of “three dimensions: the ongoing social activity, the role relationships involved, and the symbolic or rhetorical channel.” These dimensions are referred to, respectively, as “field,” “tenor,” and “mode.”

This section presents the realization of each variable in the selected English and Arabic data from Facebook and Instagram memes. Due to space constraints in this study, only a few memes are analyzed as references for each discussed concept, which can be applied to other similar memes.

5.1.1. Field

The contextual concept of the field is reflected through the ideational metafunction, which implicates language in various social situations. Halliday (1978) defined the field as the topic or activity taking place. Based on this notion, memes in the four sub-corpora are classified into three main topics: social commentary, relationships, and politics.

Table 5: Codes of English and Arabic memes of the field on Facebook and Instagram

Ideational (Field)	Facebook (English)	Facebook (Arabic)	Instagram (English)	Instagram (Arabic)
Social Commentary	(2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15)	(1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14)	(2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15)	(1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)
Relationships	(1, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13)	(1, 3, 4, 7, 12, 13, 15)	(3, 8, 11, 12, 13)	(4, 5, 11, 13, 15)
Politics	-	-	(1)	(2)

Source: Calculated by the author

5.1.2. Social Commentary

Social commentary involves the activity of addressing various social and cultural issues using rhetorical devices. Educating the public and raising awareness about different life phenomena can help implement and promote change while appealing to people's sense of justice (Yaacob, Azahari, & Ismail, 2013). Regarding the selected English Facebook and Instagram corpora, expressions like “mother-in-law” and “parenting advice” illustrate familial dynamics in a comedic way. The recipients of memes need to understand the contextual meaning associated with the images and captions. For instance, meme recipients need to be familiar with crime-themed movies to understand that, as depicted in *Face-Eng. [2]*, murderers often hide behind shower curtains in such films. Similarly, they need to have experienced being part of a group where sudden fights among members are common, as illustrated in *Insta-Eng. [14]*. This understanding applies to the rest of the selected memes (see Table 5). These memes are culturally bound, requiring mutual understanding of the context for them to be interpreted effectively.



Figure 1: Social Commentary field of Memes.

Similarly, Arabic Facebook and Instagram memes symbolize localized social activities (see Table 5). These recognizable images rely on context-dependent emblematic imagery and cultural symbols that originally carried fixed meanings. For example, understanding the *Face-Arab. [13]* meme requires familiarity with celebrities named Ahmed, as the name is humorously associated with unsuccessful marriages. Likewise, *Insta-Arab. [3]* memes illustrate the social appropriation of what is considered acceptable or not in social expression. For instance, the image of a large book represents everything the speaker wants to say, while the smaller book symbolizes the words actually spoken. These memes derive their significance not from the images themselves but from their symbolic meaning within a particular society. This finding aligns with the study by Huang, Han, Ran, Yang, and Yang (2024), which concluded that memes are instrumental in expressing humor, emotions, and various social phenomena. Their study also emphasized the role of age in interpreting cross-language internet memes.

5.1.3. Relationships

The following section discusses image-text memes where both images and captions are combined to create humor within different relational contexts. The analysis of the sample English Facebook and Instagram memes reveals that words like "honey" and "babe" establish a marital context that reflects the intimate relationship between a wife and her husband, as shown in the *Face-Eng. [4]* meme. However, language alone is insufficient to reveal the humor in these memes. For instance, the image of a couple standing in a kitchen portrays a relational dynamic where the wife is busy preparing food while the husband looks at her, wondering if he has ever complimented her bad cooking before and why she continues to cook poorly. Additionally, other memes depict the different types of friends one might encounter, such as those who are unreserved and feel comfortable talking about anything, as illustrated in the *Insta-Eng. [3]* meme.



Figure 2: Relationships field of memes

This is also the case with the Arabic Facebook and Instagram memes (see Table 5). In these memes, the textual part explains the attitude, which is based on both the realistic and the "unrealistic dimension of the image to create humor" (Bardakis, 2021, p. 41). The selected Arabic memes represent activities that reflect family relationships using authentic images of famous actors and unrealistic images featuring monkeys. For example, in *Face-Arab. [13]*, the caption is written on an image taken from a scene in a famous Egyptian movie to depict how brothers fight over wearing each other's clothes—a common occurrence in Arab culture. However, in *Insta-Arab. [5]*, although the caption realistically expresses how the husband is annoyed and complains to his mother about his wife's inability to cook, the image of the monkey does not realistically depict the wife. The concept of blending linguistic and visual signs in memes to convey a particular message aligns with Wagener's (2023) findings. His study concluded that memes can serve as an efficient tool for conveying hate and violent speech in public discourse in a mitigated manner.

5.1.4. Politics

Humor is one of the ways to approach political issues, especially when one seeks to address them tentatively and less directly. Memes are known for their efficiency in spreading political news and power by adding a more spirited angle to issues. Thus, "the meme can be your instrument of political expression, creating a parallel to the caricature as a means for political expression in the 19th and 20th centuries" (Leiser, 2022, p. 242). However, understanding the context of political memes requires shared background knowledge between the creator and the receiver.



Insta- Eng. [1]

Figure 3: Politics field of memes

Considering the *Insta-Eng. [1]* meme, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to grasp the intended political message without recognizing the individuals featured in the meme. A basic understanding of both sports and politics would enable someone to identify Conor McGregor and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which is crucial to comprehending the caption that states, “Throwback to when Conor McGregor’s life flashed before his eyes.” Such mutual political knowledge is essential to understanding the connotative meaning of the meme. It is noteworthy that politics is the least represented field in the given data, with only one instance recorded in English Instagram memes among the selected examples. This finding aligns with Halversen and Weeks' (2023) study, which emphasized the role of memes in shaping political behavior and attitudes. They argued that people share political memes to convey indirect messages, such as mocking politicians, persuading others, or informing their audience.

5.1.5. Tenor

Language is not solely about representing reality; rather, it is a medium of interaction between interlocutors (Halliday, 1985, p. 20). For this reason, Halliday expands on the interpersonal metafunction (see Table 1), where language is seen as a means of action rather than merely reflecting reality. This function connects to the tenor of discourse and is realized through the systems of mood, polarity, modality, and dialogue. Below is the analysis of each type as they appear in the four English and Arabic sub-corpora.

Table 6: Codes of English and Arabic memes of tenor on Facebook and Instagram

Interpersonal (Tenor)	Type	Facebook English	Instagram Arabic
Mood	Declarative	(1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15)	(1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14)
	Question	(2, 13)	(3)
	Imperative	(3)	(2, 5, 6)
Polarity	Negative particle	(5, 9, 13, 15)	(5, 11*2, 13)
	Lexical negative	(4, 10, 12)	(3*2, 5*2, 8, 11, 14, 15)
Modality	Deontic	(5, 12)	(1, 4, 11*2, 15)
	Epistemic	(8, 12)	-
Dialogue	Statement/statement	(2, 6, 12, 15)	-
	Statement/question	(4, 12)	(4, 5)

* The asterisk denotes repetitions of a pattern. Source: Calculated by the author

5.1.6. Mood

Concerning the use of grammar, the analysis revealed that different declarative sentence structures are used, ranging from simple to complex ones. It also revealed the presence of imperative sentences and rhetorical questions. Simple sentences are employed to ensure directness and simplicity, making the underlying message easier for the audience to grasp. Meanwhile, complex sentences are utilized to add layers of meaning to the meme (Verstraete, 2015). In some cases, rhetorical questions are used to evoke a humorous response. The declarative mood is extensively used in English Facebook memes, supporting the idea that this mood is effective in engaging the audience, particularly when delivered sarcastically. Declarative structures are also present in Arabic Facebook and Instagram memes. Following this is the question mood, which is primarily employed rhetorically to make the communicative message more engaging and memorable. However, the least used mood in the selected data is the imperative, reflecting its informal context as it carries a directive or imposing sense (see Table 6).



Figure 4: Tenor register of mood

5.1.7. Polarity

Beyond mood, polarity refers to grammatical constructions that deal with negation systems, either through lexical negators or grammatical ones. Strategies for constructing positive or negative clauses using negators are evident in English Facebook and Instagram memes. Polarity is also expressed through lexical negatives, which are recorded in Arabic Facebook memes but absent in Arabic Instagram memes. The Arabic data registers more lexical negatives on Facebook, with only one occurrence in Instagram memes (see Table 6). Memes such as *Insta-Eng.* [6] and *Face-Arab.* [5] demonstrate that negative assertions (NEG) do not always aim to convey new information; instead, they often seek "to correct the hearer's misguided beliefs" or, in some cases, as illustrated by *Face-Eng.* [9] and *Insta-Arab.* [12], they may function as "norm-reversals," where meme creators play with words to subvert reality (Givón, 1978, p. 9).



Figure 5: Tenor register of polarity

5.1.8. Modality

Modality, including deontic and epistemic types, is a linguistic system that frames language as a mode of action rather than a mere reflection of reality (Winiharti, 2012). In the selected data, deontic modality appears in English Facebook and Instagram memes and Arabic Facebook memes, but it is absent in Arabic Instagram memes. This modality indicates obligation or permission. Conversely, epistemic modality, which expresses possibility or prediction, is evident in English memes but absent in Arabic memes. For instance, in *Face-Eng.* [12], the modal verb "can" in "Daddy, can you get my balloon?" signifies epistemic modality, while "No, I cannot" demonstrates deontic modality. The distinction lies in "the speaker's judgment of the reality status of a state of affairs," as illustrated in *Face-Arab.* [5], where a group of friends humorously predicts their failure in an exam, based on mutual understanding and shared knowledge (Radden & Dirven, 2007, p. 246).



Figure 6: Tenor register of modality

5.1.9. Dialogue

Memes often act as a coping tool for social phenomena, providing an engaging and accurate reflection of reality. Dialogue within memes enhances the understanding of the addressed topic while showcasing social interactions humorously. The analysis reveals two types of dialogue: statement/statement and statement/question. In English Facebook memes, the first type (statement/statement) is absent but is present in Instagram memes. In contrast, Arabic Facebook memes exhibit more statement/statement dialogue than Arabic Instagram memes. Meanwhile, the second type (statement/question) is evident across all sub-corpora, including English and Arabic Facebook and Instagram memes (see Table 6). For example, *Face-Eng.* [4] humorously depicts a conversation between a husband and wife about her inability to cook. Similarly, *Insta-Eng.* [8] presents an internal dialogue of a person debating whether to marry, personified as a conversation between two individuals. Arabic memes, such as *Face-Arab.* [4], also portray social activities through text messages that use puns and wordplay to create humor. Additionally, *Insta-Arab.* [12] reflects internal conversations of individuals struggling with delayed comprehension, adding a humorous twist.



Figure 7: Tenor register of dialogue

5.1.10. Mode

The context of language is critical in understanding the meaning of a given text. Originally, context referred to the surrounding environment of the text that precedes and follows sentences. However, this view has evolved in modern linguistics to encompass “the nonverbal environment, in which communication takes place and physical activities are going on” (Liu, 2014, p. 1239). The context theory of language, primarily formulated by Halliday (1975: 265), classifies it into two main types: “the context of situation and the context of culture.” Since humor is inherently social and requires cultural knowledge, analyzing humor in memes must consider both situational and cultural contexts.

The researchers in this study approached humor as if it were a genre. This perspective stems from the understanding that humor possesses distinctive styles and features, making it a unique form of communication involving cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral skills. According to Bakhtin (1986), a genre represents a specific form of language used within an activity, characterized by particular traits, content, style, and compositional structure. Consequently, genre (as a cultural context) is conceptualized as a register (as a situational context), which, in turn, is conceived as language.

The concept of mode is intricately tied to the textual metafunction, representing the semantic and communicative nature of a text. This metafunction includes “textual interactivity,” “spontaneity,” and “communicative distance” (Bakuuro, 2017, p. 215). Linguistic interaction involves instances of verbal or written communication occurring within operational contexts, distinguishing them from citational contexts found in dictionaries. A text, seen not merely as a collection of sentences but as encoded semantic units, serves as the foundation of the semantic process. Omissions by speakers are intentional encodings that listeners can decipher based on shared principles of realization. Moreover, text signifies a choice, representing the intended meaning selected from multiple possible options. Thus, a text embodies actualized meaning potential, reflecting the decisions made within the communicative act.

This discussion explores how language serves a social function in humor memes, focusing on English Facebook and Instagram memes and Arabic Facebook and Instagram memes. The audience’s role in decoding these deliberate encodings is crucial, as humor is realized through their understanding. The interpretation of the selected memes combines textual and visual constructions, emphasizing textual aspects of mode such as ellipsis, exophoric and anaphoric references, conjunction, lexical collocation, and repetition, as illustrated in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Codes of English and Arabic memes of the model on Facebook and Instagram

Textual (Mode)	Facebook		Instagram	
	English	Arabic	English	Arabic
Ellipsis	(2, 4, 5, 11, 12)	(3, 8, 14)	(2, 5, 6, 7*1, 11)	(3, 9, 13)
Exophoric reference	(6, 7, 10*2, 13, 15)	(6)	(3, 5, 7*4, 8, 11, 14)	
Anaphoric reference	(2, 4, 6, 8, 11*2)	(1, 3*5, 4, 5, 8*6, 11*5, 1,6, 7*15, 8, 12*2, 13*2, 14*4)	(1, 6, 7*15, 8, 10*3)	(1*3, 2, 3*2, 4*1 5*2, 8*2 10*2, 13)
Conjunction	(1, 4*3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15*2)	(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8*5, 9, 10*2, 11*2, 12*3, 14*3, 15)	2, 5, 6, 7*1, 9, 10*3, 11, 12, 13, 14)	(1*3, 2*2, 5*2, 8, 9, 13, 14)
Lexical collocation	-	-	(1, 5*2, 8,7*2)	
Repetition	(3,9*2, 11, 13, 15)	(1,2, 3, 4*2, 5*4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12)	12, 5*2, 6, 7*10, 8*3, 10*3)	(2, 3,7,9)

* The asterisk denotes repetitions of a pattern. Source: Calculated by the author

5.1.11. Ellipsis

The data analysis shows that ellipsis is one of the linguistic techniques appearing in meme captions accompanying meme images. It is observed that meme creators tend to reduce linguistic elements whenever possible, especially when the visual illustration effectively communicates the elliptical elements (Vásquez & Aslan, 2021). Since internet users use memes as a daily communication tool, they often rely on informal, abbreviated, and elliptical language. The corpus analysis of the data demonstrates that ellipses in both English and Arabic Facebook and Instagram memes manifest in various forms. These are either indicated by three evenly spaced periods or through the omission of words, suggesting an incomplete thought, as seen in Face-Arab. [8] and Insta-Arab. [13]. Abbreviations and shortened forms are also used, though infrequently, as in “recog...” for the verb “recognize” in Face-Eng. [5], or omitting a word that is already inferred from the context in Insta-Eng. [2]. Such usage can be categorized as slang or non-standard language, intended to engage diverse audiences.



Figure 8: Ellipsis mode of memes

It is evident from the analyzed memes that the accompanying images and visual aids often express an unfinished thought. However, this meaning can only be understood with prior knowledge of the subject matter shared between the interlocutors. Memes are culture-specific, requiring an understanding of minute cultural nuances to fully grasp their fragmented context. Therefore, images play a vital role in bridging these gaps. Pictures of celebrities, individuals in specific professions, and scenes from daily life complete the missing words. Consequently, the relationship between ellipsis as a semantic feature of memes and mode as an element of semiotic structures of situations is justified. Since meme images depict daily activities, they are considered part of the cultural context essential for understanding the mode metafunction.

5.1.12. Reference (Anaphoric-Exophoric)

Reference, encompassing anaphoric and exophoric types, is another semantic feature linked to the mode metafunction. Generally, reference expressions refer back to other expressions or ideas mentioned earlier in the text, known as "antecedents" (Sultonov & Numonova, 2021). In the case of anaphoric reference, expressions refer back to a word used earlier in a text or conversation to avoid repetition. However, in memes, the reference is not always a word; at times, it is visual elements understood from the context. English Facebook and Instagram memes utilize pronouns such as "it," "him," "he," and "his" without explicitly mentioning the linguistic referents, as shown in Insta-Eng. [1] and Insta-Arab. [1]. However, the images accompanying the text fill in the missing meaning. Similarly, anaphora is also evident in Arabic Facebook and Instagram memes (see Table 7).

Exophoric references, on the other hand, point to something outside the text using pronouns like "this" and "there," as seen in Face-Eng. [6] and Face-Arab. [6]. With visual aids as part of the memes' context, identifying the referent is not challenging for meme users. Exophoric constructions are common in English Facebook and Instagram memes. However, they appear less frequently in Arabic Facebook memes and are absent from Arabic Instagram memes (see Table 7).



Figure 9: Reference for memes

5.1.13. Conjunction

Conjunctions, another critical semantic feature, play an essential role in maintaining communication flow and connecting sentence parts. The analysis reveals that various types of conjunctions are extensively used in English Facebook and Instagram memes, as well as in Arabic Facebook and Instagram memes (see Table 7). Although conjunctions are purely linguistic features, their role in enhancing humor is significant. The memes demonstrate how connectors expressing addition, contradiction, or options improve coherence and cohesion by linking ideas. However, it can sometimes be difficult to grasp the underlying humor without images that clarify the complexity and chopiness of multiple short sentences. Despite the coherence and cohesion provided by conjunctions, "there is an unnatural human interference coherent with meme mutation, which adds to the model of how memes can also have human interference that changes the pattern or nature of the meme itself" (Ounjian, 2018, p. 16).



Figure 10: Conjunction mode of memes

5.1.14. Lexical Collocation

Lexical collocations are significant because they provide knowledge on how to use words accurately and naturally, whereby “the meaning of a word is determined by the co-occurring words” (Rao, 2018, p.1). Accordingly, speakers may find it easier to communicate their thoughts using fixed language patterns rather than employing numerous terms and needing to figure out how to combine them correctly. To uncover lexical collocations, the researchers utilized the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to validate the collocations under examination using the Mutual Information (MI) measurement of collocation association within the reference corpus, providing solid evidence. The MI values indicate the strength of the association between the words in a collocation. However, lexical collocations were found to be used only in English Instagram memes. In the selected data, no instance of lexical collocation was identified in the English Facebook memes, as noted below:



Figure 11: Lexical Collocation mode of memes

The first pattern of collocation identified was **Noun+Noun**. The MI value for “Facial Expressions” was 13.55, indicating a strong association between the component parts of the lexical collocation. Similarly, the MI value for “Social Media” was 8.84, suggesting a significant relationship between both constituent parts. The MI value for “Commitment Issues” was 3.55, indicating a moderate frequency of co-occurrence between the two words.

Moreover, the second pattern of collocation found was **Adj+Noun**. The MI value for “homeless man” was 5.79, suggesting a strong relationship between both words and indicating they are likely to occur together. The MI value for “Good News” was 5.99, also demonstrating a strong relationship between the two words.

The third pattern of collocation identified was **Verb+Noun**. The MI value for “Thank God” was 6.66, suggesting a significant association between both words and their tendency to occur together.

5.1.15. Repetition

Another humorous aspect of the English Facebook and Instagram memes is repetition. Tannen (1989) argued that repetition is one of the key functions of humor because it fosters a sense of involvement, which, in turn, evokes laughter. Humor often relies on simple words and phrases repeated multiple times (Kitazume, 2000). By examining the memes, it becomes evident that repetition is not confined to linguistic elements alone; it also includes photographic repetition, such as the repetition of shapes, patterns, and images (Kitazume, 2000). Echoing visual elements establishes a visual rhythm, enhancing the humorous context of memes, as illustrated in the selected data (see Table 7). Consequently, meme readers construct social connotations when interpreting the meanings embedded in these memes.



Figure 12: Repetition mode of memes

6. Conclusion

In this paper, the researchers have analyzed memes from a social semiotic perspective, adopting Halliday's (1975) socio-semiotic theory. The research aimed to understand memes as image-texts embedded with humor and communicative functions. Memes are recognized as a social trend used to disseminate information quickly, particularly when humor is incorporated. Such phenomena aim to create a “vernacular metalanguage, giving people the opportunity to reconsider their attitudes, beliefs, and actions about significant aspects and issues in their lives through an exaggerated perspective” (Bardakis, 2021, p. 42). The use of memes as a form of communication is considered a visualization tool that conveys linguistic knowledge in an easily digestible format, fostering familiarity with diverse cultures. The linguistic analysis of English Facebook memes revealed that the language employed is imbued with humorous and satirical elements, complemented by images to effectively convey the intended meaning or message. Table (8) below summarizes the holistic results of the analyzed memes in this study.

Table 8: Determination of English Facebook and Instagram semantic features by elements of semiotic structures of situation

		Situational		Semantics				
		Register and Types		Facebook			Instagram	
				English	Arabic		English	Arabic
Field	Social Commentary	9	10	11	12	Ideational		
	Relationships	6	7	5	5			
	Politics	0	0	1	0			
	Total	15	17	17	17			
Tenor	Mood	13	12	12	13	Interpersonal		
	Polarity	7	12	11	1			
	Modality	4	5	7	0			
	Dialogue	2	6	4	2			
	Total	26	35	34	16			
Mode	Ellipsis	5	3	8	3	Textual		
	Exophoric Reference	6	1	9	0			
	Anaphoric Reference	6	27	21	14			
	Conjunction	11	22	15	11			
	Lexical Collocation	0	-	6	0			
	Repetition	6	14	20	4			
	Total	34	67	79	32			

Source: Calculated by the author

The study also concluded that linguistic selection is tailored to each image, targeting a specific audience capable of understanding the underlying meaning. A strategic utilization of vocabulary across the meme captions is evident, effectively establishing the context and triggering a humorous tone. The linguistic component of these memes is complemented by the images, making the mode the most frequently utilized semiotic metafunction, especially in Instagram English memes, followed by Facebook Arabic memes. Subsequently, tenor is the second most frequently used semiotic metafunction, particularly in Facebook Arabic memes and Instagram English memes. However, the field is the least utilized semiotic metafunction, with no significant differences observed among its sub-corpora.

Humorous memes can have several practical implications that significantly impact communication, marketing, mental health, education, and politics. In communication, humorous memes enhance interaction by increasing engagement and simplifying complex ideas, thereby bridging cultural gaps, particularly in cross-cultural communication. In marketing and advertising, memes authentically connect with audiences, effectively promoting brand visibility and fostering brand recognition. In education, memes stimulate students' critical thinking and contribute to building digital literacy. They also help deconstruct complex concepts into enjoyable and memorable fragments. Additionally, memes can have positive psychological effects on mental health and emotional well-being. They act as a coping mechanism for social phenomena, aiding self-expression and stress relief. Furthermore, in education, memes are used by educators to enhance critical thinking, encouraging students to analyze and interpret complex ideas and social issues. In the political realm, humorous memes provide a platform for expressing public opinion and critiquing political events in a satirical manner. They allow politicians to resonate with younger, digitally active audiences, making their communication more effective and relatable.

7. Recommendation for Further Study

To enhance the comprehensiveness of future analyses, it is recommended to expand the dataset by incorporating memes from additional social media platforms, such as Twitter and TikTok, through a cross-platform data collection approach. This would provide a broader understanding of meme usage across different digital environments. Further studies could also explore themes beyond humor, such as political satire and social activism, using thematic content analysis to investigate the linguistic and cultural expressions of diverse content types. Additionally, conducting longitudinal examinations would allow researchers to track and understand changes in the linguistic and cultural characteristics of memes over time, addressing societal shifts and their impact on semiotics. Applying alternative semiotic theories and frameworks, such as Peirce's triadic model (symbol, icon, index) or Barthes' theory of myth, could provide a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between text and visuals in memes. These approaches would enrich the analysis and offer a more detailed perspective on the dynamic nature of memes as a form of communication.

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Appendix 1
A: English Facebook memes



Meme [1] **Meme [2]** **Meme [3]** **Meme [4]** **Meme [5]**



Meme [6] **Meme [7]** **Meme [8]** **Meme [9]** **Meme [10]**



Meme [11] **Meme [12]** **Meme [13]** **Meme [14]** **Meme [15]**

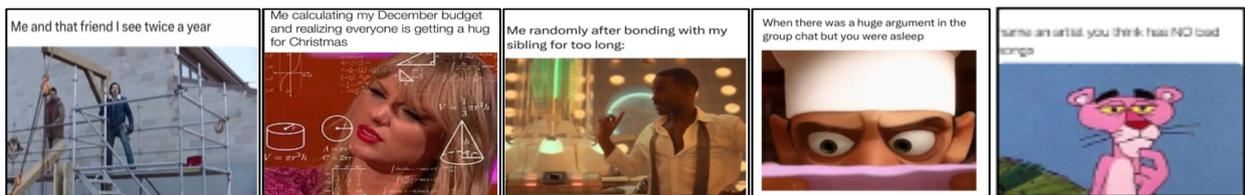
B: English Instagram memes



Meme [1] **Meme [2]** **Meme [3]** **Meme [4]** **Meme [5]**



Meme [6] **Meme [7]** **Meme [8]** **Meme [9]** **Meme [10]**



Meme [11] **Meme [12]** **Meme [13]** **Meme [14]** **Meme [15]**

Appendix 2
A: Arabic Facebook memes



Meme [1] Meme [2] Meme [3] Meme [4] Meme [5]



Meme [6] Meme [7] Meme [8] Meme [9] Meme [10]



Meme [11] Meme [12] Meme [13] Meme [14] Meme [15]

B: Arabic Instagram memes



Meme [1] Meme [2] Meme [3] Meme [4] Meme [5]



Meme [6] Meme [7] Meme [8] Meme [9] Meme [10]



Meme [11] Meme [12] Meme [13] Meme [14] Meme [15]