

Linguistic Layers of Laughter: A Multilevel Analysis of Humor in Urdu Jokes

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Abstract

This study explores the construction of humor in Urdu jokes by analyzing them through semantic, pragmatic, syntactic and sociocultural aspects of the language. One of the main aims is to study how every level of language adds humor; discover the hidden social and cultural parts and uncover similar language forms commonly used in Urdu humor. A selection of 40 jokes in Urdu was generated by collecting them from public sites such as Google, Facebook and Instagram. Using qualitative principles, the data was personally transcribed and reviewed closely both thematically and linguistically. A data-driven method was used which let the analysis reveal patterns naturally. The analysis found that humor in Urdu humor depends heavily on words with different meanings, uncommon uses of language and familiar expressions. Strategies such as swapping between languages, using familiar phrases and mentioning traditionally recognized ideas are important to the humor. People are able to release forbidden thoughts, hidden irritation and social anxiety by laughing over jokes like these. In terms of cultural meaning, they give insight into the ways society treats gender, social positions and differences among generations. All in all, the study proves that Urdu jokes have greater value than mere entertainment, displaying original ways of expressing ideas, group mindsets and cultural knowledge of those who speak Urdu.

Keywords: Linguistic Analysis, Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, Cultural Discourse, Urdu Humor.

Introduction

Humor is one of the universals of any human language, but its architecture and purpose vary quite a lot from culture to culture, linguistically speaking. Linguists have since ages tried to understand the complex relationship of language, cognition and culture to humor. Though very common, humor cannot be defined as one thing. Humor according to Attardo (1994) is “an intended or unintended stimulant that triggers laughter, mirth or amusement from the perceiver”. Raskin (1985) provides a more semantic point of view: describing humor as “a text which is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts that are opposite in a certain sense”. Crystals (1998) speaking about language play defines the humor as “the exploitation of linguistic form and structure for purposes of amusement”. Such explanations reveal the multi-dimensional aspect of

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the phenomenon of the humor. Linguistic, psychological, and social, it is a fertile field for analysis viz a viz lesser-studied languages like Urdu.

The field of linguistic humor had acquired theoretical footing in the form of Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) put forward by Raskin, under which it was argued that jokes were built on the activation of two competing semantic scripts. Attardo (1994) however took further and expanded this to GTVH by identifying 6 interacting knowledge resources, script opposition, logical mechanism, situation, target, narrative strategy and language that accounted for the structure of the jokes. Such models serve as valuable tools for showing how semantic conflict and the continuation of narrative evoke laughter.

One of the primary layers of analysis is, of course, pragmatics, especially Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) which states that communication is based on four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. Most cases of humor are caused by deliberate transgressions of these maxims. Cutting (2002) suggests that such pragmatic breaches are a part of humor because they create surprise and demand inference. Urdu jokes play with these maxims through obvious irony or excess if they want, or through the inscrutable topic shift, the latter of which demands that the audience reconstruct meaning from their context.

Phonological and morphological features, go hand in hand and also contribute in Urdu humor. According to Crystal (1998), alliteration, rhyme, and reduplication in the comic sense are everything in a comical language. Syntactic and semantic ambiguity also add more to that funny potential in Urdu jokes. Urdu code switching, especially between Urdu, English, and local languages, is an observed feature of contemporary Urdu humor. Code-switching being a socially meaningful act that indexes identity, power, and social alignment is proved by Gumperz (1982). In humorous discourse, code-switching will usually overdo class distinctions or imitations of language pretensions. Baig and Mahboob (2020) discovered that Urdu-English switching is a common strategy for reverting to the elitism or contrasting global and local discourses, which instigates comic dissonances that are appealing to a bilingual public.

Laughter also has sociocultural functions in a society such as Pakistan where, direct challenge is avoided. Citing Hymes' (1974) ethnography of speaking, the context, gender, social status and regional norms determine the location of humor in Urdu. Davies (1990) made the distinction between affiliative humor which tended to build social cohesion, and aggressive humor, which was intended to criticize or mock. Anjum (2019) took into account how it is that risqué and satirical humor in Urdu frequently thwarts patriarchal norms but at the same time reinforces some stereotypes through repetition.

According to a cognitive linguistic approach Conceptual Blending Theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) associates humor with the merging of seemingly incompatible mental spaces to create new and sometimes ridiculous interpretations. Rehman (2021) used this model in relation to Urdu jokes to demonstrate how surprising combinations, e.g., mixing religious discourse and pop culture, afford layered (depending on how the audience recognizes their schema and becomes interpreters of cultural ambiguities) humor.

The digital age has brought in new forms of humor by way of generous examples, memes (visual, textual and culturally rich). As Shifman (2014) observes, memes are participatory and iterative, they poke at the humor existing in shared social knowledge and capacity to remix culture instead. Zaidi (2022) investigated the visual-verbal collages that Urdu memes use to present statements that provide satire on topics such as politics, inflation, and marriage to ensure that the subject helps create humor for all demographics.

Translation studies also face peculiar comedy problems. According to Toury (1995), and Katan (2004) humor very frequently relies on culturally specific knowledge and idiomatic expressions and timing, which is hard to reconcile with other languages. Memon (2018) showed how subtitling Urdu jokes into English results in loss of humor because of difference in syntax generation and cultural assumptions; and lexical play.

That the academic discourse about humor in Urdu is inadequate despite such theoretical tools available is a fact. This research seeks to fill the said gap by carrying out a multilevel linguistic analysis of 40 Urdu jokes (10 from each of the four platforms). In-depth analysis of phonological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and sociocultural layers, the research intends to grasp how humor is constructed and perceived in the case of Urdu and how its reality views that of the larger society.

Literature Review

Rafiq et al. (2022) studied the socio-pragmatic aspects for Urdu-English code-switching in the bilingual speech communities in Pakistan. Their goal was to determine the categories and reason of code switching in the social interactions. The study showed that speakers strategically code-switch according to intent, audience, and context, with the switch exhibited according to Poplack's categories and The Markedness Model of Myer-Scotton. The research focused on the way social norms and communicative needs determine code choice. A limitation identified, was the qualitative nature and the localized sample may not necessarily capture all bilingual communities in Pakistan. Akhtar (2010) has attempted to understand how gendered syntax and lexical ambiguity in Urdu produces double meanings that form part of core of many jokes. Misplaced modifiers, vague postpositional phrases, puns over homophones – it is more than possible that misplaced modifiers, ambiguous postpositional phrases and puns over homophones are used to surprise the listener by delivering something unexpected and thereby creating the essential element of humor.

Iqbal et al. (2020) performed a linguistic analysis of a social media phenomenon involving jokes made of Pakistani wives in order to examine how they use humor to support the gender stereotypes. The focus of the study was the hidden underlying societal perceptions that are captured in these jokes, especially those found on Facebook. Results indicated that a good part of the gendered humor came from having wives portrayed as naggers or control freaks, which reinforced negative gender stereotypes. The authors used the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) in order to analyze the structures of jokes. However, the major limitation of data was also its 紧密, because only jokes from several Facebook pages were investigated, which can in turn limit the generalizability of results. Rahman (2015) describes how some morphological patterns (comic employment of diminutives or suffixes, for example) also enliven joke telling through altering tone and register in unexpected ways.

Ullah et al. (2025) identified the effect of semantic ambiguity in social media jokes and their contribution in humor and communication. Their aim was to see how dual meaning in Urdu jokes work as humor and yet may lead to miscommunication. The research revealed that ambiguity is an important method of generating humor but also produces different interpretations among the readers.

Baig and Mahboob (2020) examine how Urdu-English code-switching foregrounds the parody of elitism or comment on globalization. For instance, jokes combining formal English with street Urdu/Punjabi sound actually incoherent and therefore the source of social/cultural hierarchies and absurdities. Based on this multi-lingual play we can see a hybrid linguistic reality of many Pakistanis and a medium for satire and commentaries. In 2020, Khan, Ali, Hussain and Noreen investigated Facebook jokes about COVID-19 to analyze how humor is used as a way of

articulating cultural attitudes and coping strategies in times of crises. The study's intention was to determine what repeating themes and social issues of jokes were found during the pandemic. Drawing on Petrova's *Linguo-Cultural Approach*, authors discovered that the humor during COVID-19 was determined by such themes as gender roles, precautionary attitudes, and political satire. Zahoor (2020) focused on a topic of how humor within memes led to psychological relief after the post-COVID-19 period especially via WhatsApp meme sharing. The purpose of the research was to develop linguistic strategies for making memes funny and useful for emotional coping. Revising the Theory of Humor developed by Sultanoff (1994), Zahoor found that exaggeration, irony, and the surprise of punchlines were the employed method of memes that helped users cope with stress.

Zafar (2024) carried out a sociolinguistic consistence on English-Urdu code-mixing among educated Pakistani speakers in order to understand the changing pattern of bilingual communication. The goal of the research was to determine the sociocultural and contextual reasons for the code mixing behavior. Research findings showed that code-mixing is common in both formal and informal contexts – in identity, prestige and convenience of communication. The researchers Qureshi, Naveed, Nawab, Ullah, and Wahab (2024) studied linguistic characteristics of memes written in both English and Urdu to learn how language affects humor and the audience. The goal of the research was to discover some particular language tools that make memes relatable and funny. Using the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), the research established that memes capitalised on intentional misspelling, puns, cultural references to amplify comic effect.

The present article is based on Channa et al. (2021) quantitative study on Urdu-English code-mixing and switching in Pakistani entertainment channels to examine the extent to which language blending is used for communication and entertainment. The goal was to measure the usage and detect patterns of lexical insertion. The study discovered constant code-switching, which is frequently used for stylistic or expressive functions. The researchers employed statistical methods (mean, median, mode) of measuring frequency. But the study was only done in the entertainment medium and may not reflect on the code-switching trends in such as educational or religious programming.

Rehman et al. (2023) examined political memes of the 2022 Pakistani election to investigate how linguistic humor shaped the opinion and the discourse of the public. The study was concerned with the semiotic and discursive ways memes were used to reflect political ideologies.

Yousaf et al. (2021) indulged themselves with pragmatic and linguistic strategies in Pakistani television comedy shows trying to discover how the construction of humor through speech acts and conversational implicature is done. The study adopted Speech Act Theory and Grice's Cooperative Principle for study the dialogues. Discoveries showed that breaking of maxims, particularly relevance and manner, played a large part into creating a comedic effect. However, only scripted shows were analyzed in the study, even though this would only reveal insights into spontaneous or unscripted humor in natural conversation.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the analysis is to see how the humor of Urdu jokes is developed on various linguistic layers of semantical, pragmatic and sociocultural nature that would open up the underlying meanings and a societal comment. It points out that these jokes are responding to language play, incongruity and references to culture, and provoke laughter to capture social realities.

Research Questions

1. Which linguistic forms help in forming humor in Urdu jokes?
2. Which linguistic levels are responsible for creating humor in Urdu jokes?
3. What role does language play and incongruity play in the use of Urdu jokes to generate humorous effects?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are to:

- Analyze humor from different linguistics levels to show how each level contributes in humour effect
- Highlight cultural and social cues embedded in the jokes
- Identify common patterns and structures in Urdu jokes

Significance of the Study

This study is also important because it contributes to the already lacking area of humor studies by concentrating precisely on the Urdu language, which is spoken by more than 170 million people around the globe. Despite its well-sutured literary and cultural history, Urdu is still not much explored in research on linguistic humor. By studying jokes in Urdu, this research improves our knowledge about the way in which humor operates not only as a form of entertainment, but also as a representation of cultural norms, people's attitudes towards gender and even a commentary on society. It illuminates how language users play with the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic, to produce laughter and manage social relations. This research also helps educationists and linguists who are interested in the relationship of language, culture and identity in non-English contexts.

Research Methodology

Research Framework

No predetermined modal or theoretical framework was applied in this research. Rather, it took an inductive, data driven approach to discovering themes and texts in the corpora themselves. The analysis utilizes general linguistic and pragmatic principle (Grice's maxims, speech acts to name but a few) but is not burdened with a formal theory of humor, therefore the results is based on the observed reality of the actual use of language in the jokes.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study refers to all available public Urdu jokes available on the internet. From a larger population of jokes presented by Johnson (2000), 40 jokes were chosen for linguistic analysis forming a manageable representative corpus. The selected jokes were made without regard to topic but were expected to be filled in form.

Sampling Technique and Criteria

Random sampling procedure was applied to the joke selection to ensure that this selection was unbiased and varied in contents. The following were the critical parameters on which selection was based The joke should be written in complete Urdu script, which is available on an open online platform, and describe clear structure of humor, which includes premise and a punch line.

Research Type

The method of research employed in this study is qualitative; it aims at interpreting texts deeply rather than numerically or statistically. Qualitative method will suit very well for studying fine, multiple, and colored shades of humor, especially for cultural and linguistic nuances.

Tool for Data Collection

The jokes were manually gathered from several open sources across online platforms such as Google search tabs, Facebook posts and Instagram. Afterwards, they were converted into a standard format suitable for textual discourse analysis in a readable format.

Tool for Data Analysis

The data were analyzed along qualitative textual analysis lines with emphasis being put on the identification of humor's patterns at different linguistic levels including semantic ambiguity, pragmatic violations, syntactic structures and sociocultural references. The analytical process was interpretive in its nature; citing context and linguistic knowledge it provided an explanation of how and why certain jokes produced comedy.

Research Analysis

Joke 1

تم اس دنیا کی پہلی لڑکی ہو جس سے میں نے محبت کی۔۔۔ لڑکا
تم دنیا کے پہلے لڑکے ہو جس کے جھوٹ پر میں نے اعتبار کیا۔ لڑکی

Interpretation

This joke follows a romantic cliché before using it ironically through sarcasm to create its humorous mannerism through semantic and pragmatic reversal. The exclamation of the boy's face "بو... لڑکی پہلی کی دنیا اس تم", is an exaggeration of a romantic hyperbole. It suggests an unusual, eternal, and pristine love, a standard cliché of the Urdu romantic discourse.

The girl, by responding thus indicates that this romantic idealism is a lie which produces semantic incongruity. Rather than recognizing the romantic intent, she recognizes it as socially common deceit and ironically commends herself for "believing" the lie.

At the pragmatic level, this breaks Grice's Maxim of Quality: we expect the boy's claim to be taken on its face value, while the girl intentionally flouts the maxim to make fun of the speaker.

The humor as well is gendered: In the South Asian subculture, for example, the male combines the space available to him with poetic exaggeration so as to try to impress the female, and the female is often characterized as intuitively skeptical. This draws from common sociolinguistic knowledge, where audience assurance is implicit knowing that the romantic exaggeration will be followed by its debunk in sarcastic disbelief.

Joke 2

میں اس سے شادی کروں گی جس کا کاروبار بہت اونچا ہو۔۔۔ لڑکی
مجھ سے کر لو، میں مینار پاکستان کے اوپر پاؤں بیچتا ہوں۔ لڑکا

Interpretation

This joke is a paradigmatic example of a clash between literal and figurative use of language, one of the basic ways that underlie linguistic humor.

“The ‘ہو اونچا بہت کاروبار’ What the girl is saying is a metaphor on a high status or profitable business. However, the boy, cleverly misinterprets the figure of speech by coming up with a situation, which is literal, replying: selling snacks on a high monument (Minar-e-Pakistan).

This gives rise to a semantic clash between idiomatic use and literal reinterpretation. It is also pun or language play, and the dual denotation of “اونچا” (high—literally and figuratively) is used for comic purposes.

Sociolinguistically, the joke makes a statement about materialistic expectations of marriage proposals, Women demanding financial security, men’s culture of being forced to win such stipulations. The lunacy of selling papads outside a monument mocks this economic pressure by twisting it beyond all reasonableness.

This variety of humor agrees with the Script-Based Semantic Theory of Humor (SSTH) by Raskin: two contradictory scripts (romantic ambition and absurd literalness) unexpectedly clash leading to laughter.

Joke 3

میں آپ سے دوستی کرنا چاہتا ہوں۔۔۔ لڑکا
تو پہلے ہماری کون سی لڑائی تھی بھائی۔۔؟ لڑکی

Interpretation

This joke arises from the sarcastic answer the girl gives to a regular romantic suggestion. When the boy says, boy says, " "میں آپ سے دوستی کرنا چاہتا ہوں" ("I want to be friends with you') are meant to begin a romantic relationship by pretending it's just about friendship. But the girl says, "تو پہلے " "بھائی" ("It's just not right, brother, since a fight between us never ended in anger") which turns his friendship offer into a truce to settle an earlier quarrel. The word "بھائی" (brother) makes it clear that she sees him as a 'brother,' so it doesn't allow him to romanticize her in a culturally lighthearted but alerting way. Here, the humor comes from finding something unexpected in language, plus from how the girl manipulates the situation to fit her own ways which are based on cultural ideas of being polite, honoring others and having a playful mind.

Joke 4

"کیا تم مجھے یاد نہیں کرتے؟" :ایک دن وہ ہم سے ملی اور بولی
"اگر یاد کرنا اتنا آسان ہوتا تو ہم اپنی کلاس میں ٹاپ نہ کر لیتے۔۔۔" :ہم نے کہا

Interpretation

This humor is based on dual meaning of the word “یاد کرنا” (to remember). The girl uses it in a sense emotionally romantic, saying does the speaker ever think about her. However, the boy reads it as just memorization, in a context of academic learning. This is utter semantic vagueness. The words “یاد کرنا” perform the two lexical schemas of romantic memory and academic memorization. The humour is generated when the listener activates, unexpectedly, the second, incongruent schema. At the syntactic level, the punchline is spoken in two parallel clauses (“تو ہم اپنی کلاس میں ” “بات نہ کر لیتے”), imitation of logical cause-effect (wife doesn't want to talk away at home is equal to husband doesn't want to talk in the class), but where instead of emotional relevance we have academic struggle. Such syntactic straightness adds the deadpan aspect to the joke and that makes the joke funnier. Practically, it is Gricean violations in line again: the girl hopes for some serious romantic response (close in meaning, but emotionally intense) but the boy fails to follow the Maxim of Relevance, responding ridiculously. Socioculturally, this is a students' fear of academics

best described, making it so relatable. It attest to a type of linguistic vagueness particularly that of widespread verbs that can be reworked to draw attention to social or relational discomfort.

Joke 5

تمہاری زلفوں سے کھیلنے کو دل چاہتا ہے۔ لڑکا
"واپس دے دو، صبح کالج بھی جانا ہے۔" (وگ اتارتے ہوئے) لڑکی

Interpretation

This joke is comedy of wariness in itself both in terms of the semantics and pragmatic overturning the romantic expectations. The boy's line is a platitude of South Asian romantic discourse ("زلفوں سے کھیلنے کا دل") – deep adoration and touching closeness. However, the severe response of the girl does evaporate the aura. Her gesture of removing the wig itself brings artifice of romantic imagination into the picture. The paradox of the disproportionate relations between the ideal image (by the boy) and the fleshy fact (of the side of the girl) establishes the degree of the semantic joke. Pragmatically it goes against the romantic script, it breaks the Maxim of relevance, her reaction kills the romantic set up. Sociolinguistically, it is an ironic comment on cult of long hair as an aesthetic form and such a facade while being preserved by means of cosmetics or artificial assistance like wig. The punch line reveals the reality of the modern world of a traditional romance, once the poetic metaphor became a gag for the situation.

Joke 6

جانو، ہمارے پیار کے بارے میں کسی کو مت بتانا۔۔۔ لڑکا
تیری بہن کو ضرور بتاؤں گی، وہ کہتی تھی کوئی پاگل ہی تجھ سے پیار کرے گا۔ لڑکی

Interpretation

The point of this joke is semantic irony, pragmatic reversal. The boy is seeking privacy and this means his love is raw but he wishes to keep it from the public with a girl's response out of secretiveness, just telling his sister a person could love him. This turn produce humor by putting down the romantic mood by mockery. Practically, it contravenes the Maxim of manner and relation by introducing something that we are not expecting as a result (sister's insult) and transposes the romantic situation to mockery. It also conforms to sociolinguistic patterns since this South Asian humour makes fun of male ego-image and makes female blunt overly excessive. Exploring the cultural conceits, of male arrogance, and female mocking, sarcasm, the joke goes from intimacy to insult, and its humor.

Joke 7

پاگل نے ڈوبتے آدمی کی جان بچائی
تم نے اسے بچا کر یہ ثابت کر دیا کہ تم پاگل نہیں ہو۔۔۔ افسوس وہ آدمی بعد میں مر گیا : ڈاکٹر
وہ تو میں نے اسے سوکھنے کے لیے لٹکایا تھا۔ : پاگل

Interpretation

There is semantic incongruity and dark humor in this joke. At first it takes a redemptive shape – insane person proving reasonable with act of saving someone. That twist occurs when the "saved" ends up having been hung out to dry literally. On a semantic note, the joke depends on two meanings of the phrase "لٹکانا" (to hang). Drying vs. execution/suicide). The literal vs. figurative misinterpretation is one of the major sources of humor. Pragmatically, the punchline is a breach of the Maxim of Quality, because where it should be, right understanding of "saving" is doubted.

Sociolinguistically, it ridicules institutional assumptions on mental illness and the way sanity is determined based on isolated activities.

Joke 8

ابو، کل ہمارے گھر سے ایک بندہ کم ہو جائے گا۔۔۔ لڑکی
(اگلے دن لڑکی بھاگ گئی)
لڑکی نے کام تو ٹھیک نہیں کیا، لیکن تھی نجومی۔: باپ

Interpretation

This joke depends on dramatic irony and semantic pragmatic incongruity combination. The cryptic signs used by the daughter that point towards a tragedy (“ایک بندہ کم ہو جائے گا”) is commonplace in South Asian narratives and usually implies death. However, she eloped, making a serious prediction look like a funny confusion. The deadpan comment of the father labelling her a “نجومی” (fortune-teller) adds an element of the ironic, as he concedes the accuracy of her prophecy, in a sarcastic kind of way. This violates the Maxim of Quality and toys with expectations. Sociolinguistically, the joke embodies the taboo of girls eloping, and how such events are handled in the Pakistani homes – adding humor to the account of the matters of honor, secrecy, and pressure from the community. The combination of a serious tone with a casual punchline transmits the humour properly.

Joke 9

کیا یہاں گلے ملتے ہیں؟ لڑکی درزی کی دکان پر گئی
بسم اللہ ہی۔۔۔ ملتے تو نہیں، آپ کہتی ہیں تو مل لیتے ہیں۔: درزی کھڑا ہو کر بولا

Interpretation

This joke relies on lexical ambiguity and double entendre. The phrase “گلے ملتے ہیں” has a dual meaning “Do you do neck fittings here?” and “Do people hug here?” The girl innocently (or ambiguously) asks the question in a tailor’s shop, but the male tailor deliberately interprets it in the romantic/physical sense, leading to a socially inappropriate yet humorous response. On the semantic level, the homonym “گلے” (neck/hug) creates ambiguity, while the tailor’s cheeky reply exploits this for comic effect. Pragmatically, the tailor violates decorum and Maxim of Manner by responding flirtatiously. Sociolinguistically, the joke reflects gendered interaction and mild harassment, which is a common theme in urban humor but also a critique of male impropriety masked as comedy.

Joke 10

ایک لڑکی مجھے بہت تنگ کرتی تھی۔: لڑکا
وہ کیسے؟: دوست
"اب تیری باری ہے" جب کسی کی شادی ہوتی تو مجھے کہتی: لڑکا
پھر؟: دوست
میں نے عادت ختم کر دی۔: لڑکا
کیسے؟: دوست
"اب تیری باری ہے" جب کوئی مر جاتا تو میں اسے کہتی: لڑکا

Interpretation

This joke can be described as darkly funny, messing with pragmatic retaliation and script opposition. The girl spoils a popular cultural jibe – “اب تیری باری ہے” (you are next) – commonly

thrown around in weddings facetiously and twists around it shrilly in a death setting. The shift from a life event (marriage) to an ending (death) that results in such semantic incongruity is the very essence of humor theories such as the Script-Based Semantic Theory by Raskin. Pragmatically, the joke disobeys the social conveniences, breaching the Maxim of Politeness. Sociolinguistically, it is revealing pressure the unmarried women have in the South Asian cultures with the empowerment of the female speaker with wit and revenge. This gives the joke the element of both comedy and underhanded criticism.

Joke 11

کیا تم میری زندگی میں چاند بننا چاہو گے؟ : لڑکی
!ہاں ہاں : (خوش ہو کر) لڑکا
تو جتنی دور چاند ہے، اتنی دور دفع ہو جاؤ۔ : لڑکی

Interpretation

In this joke, semantic ambiguity and cultural metaphor reversal is used. In Urdu Romantic expression “چاند” (moon) to a person means a deep compliment about his or her beauty, admiration, and impossibility. The girl employs such metaphor to self-flatter the boy. When he agrees, she takes the turn of a phrase (again, in a poetic manner) to indicate he should be as distant as the moon (therefore effectively rejecting him in a funny poetic way). This is an intentional way of making existing metaphors overlap so that their meanings are swapped. Practically, it goes against expectations and switches a romantic compliment into an insult. Sociolinguistically, the stand-up artist demonstrates the empowerment of women and sarcasm, going against men’s romantic expectations of reciprocity. It is a cultural remark on ridicule of one-sided love by means of poetic wit.

Joke 12

مردوں کی بے وفائی سے تنگ آکر دل کرتا ہے کسی کتے سے شادی کر لوں۔ : لڑکی
نہیں ایسا مت کرنا، یہ بے نظیر نے کیا تھا اور آج نتیجہ پورا پاکستان بھگت رہا ہے۔ : لڑکا

Interpretation

Political satire, animal metaphor, and intertextuality are the techniques used to create humor in this joke. The girl is extremely frustrated with male unfaithfulness when she suggests to marry a dog a prevalent metaphor in the South Asian discourse where “کتا” (dog) is used to denote disloyalty, or brutishness. The boy comes back with a political swipe, saying that the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto married a “dog” (understood as her controversial political partner or critics’ perception of her choice), with national consequences. The humor is in the semantically incongruous and the political intertextual. Practically, this joke does not conform to decorum and one of Grice’s Maxims, the Maxim of Quality (as the analogy is extended and sarcastic). Sociolinguistically, it conveys gendered discontent with fidelity and condemnation of leadership, marrying relationship tropes with politically funny innuendoes that appeal to culturally savvy crowds.

Joke 13

کہاں جا رہی ہو؟ : (لڑکی سے) لڑکا
تیرے گھر۔ : لڑکی
میں بھی آتا ہوں۔ : لڑکا

آ جا، میں آنتی کو کہوں گی کہ بھائی لڑکیوں کو چھیڑتا ہے۔ لڑکی

Interpretation

This one is pragmatic ensnarement joke and role reversing joke. The boy flirts casually and asks her where she's going and on this, she jokingly replies "تیرے گھر" a suggestive term, but vague. The boy, excited, answers positively, but the girl traps him with an intention to accuse him of harassment. The joke extends humor through the reversal of gendered power dynamic and conversational rules. Practically, it relies on the Maxim of Relation – the answer of the girl is intentionally not consistent with romantic expectations. Sociolinguistically, it represents the real problems of street harassment and women empowerment but on a comic view, demonstrating how girls can use a defense mechanism of social scripts (telling the mother or guardian). It involves criticism of male presumptuousness and as well, empowerment of the female voice through wit.

Joke 14

آپ ناشتے میں کیا پیتے ہیں، چائے، دودھ یا کافی؟ ڈاکٹر
رہنے دیں ڈاکٹر صاحب، تکلف نہ کریں۔ مریض

Interpretation

The joke which is present in this part refers to the pragmatic misunderstanding between the doctor and the patient. As the doctor is asking a common medical question about what one eats, the patient understands him to be offering him a drink. This misinterprets and the patient politely declines thinking that it is just a question of hospitality. The humor of the joke lies in the several meanings of polite speech in South Asian cultures where there is the mixing of formality with that of friendliness thus the result of such comic misunderstandings.

Joke 15

بھابی، میں اپنے بوائے فرینڈ کو کیا دوں؟ لڑکی
وہ دیکھتا کیسا ہے؟ بھابی
خوبصورت، ہینڈسم۔ لڑکی
والا نمبر دے دو۔ JAZZ پھر میرا بھابی

Interpretation

This joke is based on pragmatic shift, sexual innuendo, female competition. The girl asks for advice about giving something to her boyfriend in an innocent manner, but the bhabhi's answer changes from advisory to predatory, as she herself wants to go and contact that handsome boy. Her "میرا JAZZ" is a coy invocation of flirtation in the name of mobile networking. Practically, this goes against the culturally perceived supportive role of an elder female (bhabhi) and aligns what she does to a rival. Common sociolinguistic knowledge in the likes of prevalence of mobile numbers and Jazz network jokes in Pakistan is utilized by the joke—which delivers a culturally relevant punchline. It is a game of norms of loyalty, flirts, and social boundaries, especially within family context.

Joke 16

بابا جی میرے لیے دعا کریں کہ میری شادی کسی سمجھ دار آدمی سے ہو۔ لڑکی
بیٹی، سمجھ دار آدمی کبھی شادی نہیں کرتا۔ بابا جی

Interpretation

This joke is based on philosophical paradox, semantic irony, and pragmatic contradiction. The girl asks for the blessing to marry a wise man, but when the Baba answers the request is taken down by dry logic. A wise man would never marry meaning that the two cannot exist together. Humor is caused by the semantic contrast of idealism and cynicism. Pragmatically, it violates the Maxim of Cooperation with the discouraging truth instead of support. Sociolinguistically, this is representative of cultural skepticism as far as marriage is concerned especially when male perspectives are concerned and it contributes to the existing popular jokes about married life being tedious. The joke raises slight criticism of the expectation of marriage by society, and the redefinition of wisdom is expressed by humorous fatalism.

Joke 17

پاپا نے کہا ہے کہ اس بار فیل ہوئی تو شادی کر دوں گا۔ لڑکی
نہ تو تم نے کتنی تیاری کی ہے؟ لڑکا
بس ویسے کی، ڈریس رہ گئی ہے۔ لڑکی

Interpretation

This is a pragmatic subversion and gender-based satire oriented joke that provides humor. The girl's line accomplishes failure in studies as a consequence for forced marriage – a prevalent force in South Asian contexts. When questioned how much she's studied, she is very smart and suggests that she hasn't studied anything and is rather preparing for her marriage (only her dress is missing). The humour lies in the contrast that there exists between the academic preparation and the bridal preparation. Practically, she violates the Maxim of Relation and switches the academic frame to the matrimonial one. Sociolinguistically, this exposes the conflict between female education and early marriage in the patriarchal societies. It ridicules the double bind that many girls are in knowing that they are supposed to excel but are punished with marriage if they don't which they may take ironically or use through such humor.

Joke 18

جب تم لڑکیوں کو: لڑکی
"I love you"
بولتے ہو تو ان کا ہاتھ کیوں پکڑ لیتے ہو؟
کیا کریں، چند ای نا دے مارے۔ لڑکا

Interpretation

From the outset this appears as an explanation of why he did it, but ironically, he is operating on the premise of their inaction as an excuse for his behavior, which is illogical as well as morally dubious, which is a source of satirical humour. From the linguistic perspective, the joke makes use of the code-switching (alternation of Urdu and Punjabi) and the socio-pragmatic irony, playing tricks on the frivolous manner in which boundaries are sometimes crossed in relationships, all under the guise of love. The comedy lies in the boy's conscious distortion of consent and his casual approach to the whole issue. On the whole, the joke displays how the everyday gendered contacts are turned upside down in the light of societal double standards, whereas the laugh alleviates the critique by the means of colloquial wit and regional flavor.

Joke 19

آج کیا پکایا ہے؟ (غصے سے) بیوی
!چڑیلے کر لے... آج کی پکانا: (دل ہی دل میں بڑبڑاتے ہوئے) شوہر

Interpretation

At first glance, the phrase is confusing, but what makes it funny is when 'karela' (bitter gourd) is connected with 'chirela' (similar to how we refer to an unpleasant or nagging woman as a witch). Though witchy karelas are not a real dish, the way the phrase mixes two well-known names is fun. "Witchy karelas" stands for how the husband feels disappointed by the vegetable and, in a funny way, suggests how he feels about the wife's demeanor. People say this to switch the meaning, describing someone's personality by proxy via their food habits.

According to psychological analysis, saying this allows the husband to gently hint at his disappointment and humorously tell his wife how he feels without actually arguing. It's how you communicate irritation in a more humorous way. This joke is funny for South Asians is because it connects to typical South Asian ways of talking about food, relationships and gender roles at home. Because "karela" and "chirela" are similar to everyday Urdu terms, their blending appeals to everyone who shares those cultural habits. Using rhyme and alliteration makes the act funnier.

Joke 20

جان، مجھے ایسے پروپوز کرو جیسے آج تک کسی نے نہ کیا ہو۔ لڑکی
، مجھ سے شادی کر کے مجھے تباہ کر دو۔ I love you کمپنی، ذلیل، لڑکا

Interpretation

This joke shows one of the semantic parody of romantic clichés and provides the self-derisive humor. The girl expects romantic ardor; she expects innovative proposal. The boy delivers a spot-on, melodramatic line in a sarcastic tone again and pleads her to "ruin" him by marrying her. The use of semantics for humour results when one uses the expected romantic imaginings such as "محبوب میں" (in the arms of a lover) with bizarrely negative words like "ذلیل" (disgraced), "تباہ" (destroy). This reverses the romantic cliché, mocking love as a curse one brings oneself in place of being a blessing. Pragmatically, it mocks the performativity of proposals and the hyperbole of proposals. It also makes use of South Asian cultural values where marriage is commonly painted in a humorous light as the end to one's personal freedom – so "تباہی" becomes a comically identifiable amplification of married life.

Joke 21

لڑکی اور لڑکا

چاندنی چاند سے ہوتی ہے ستاروں سے نہیں۔۔۔
محبت ایک سے ہوتی ہے ہزاروں سے نہیں۔۔۔
چاندنی چاند سے ہوتی ہے ستاروں کا کیا۔۔۔
محبت ایک سے ہوتی ہے ہزاروں کا کیا۔۔۔

Interpretation

This joke makes use of rhythmic form, rhetorical repetition, mock-poetic tone in order to ridicule romantic poem. It is an imitation of the structure of classical love couplet in the Urdu language (اشعار), yet loops and takes them to absurdity. The universe of "چاندنی چاند سے ہوتی ہے" is repeated with what appears to be a very deep romantic concept, however, all the parallelism makes it a cheesy nonsense. Linguistically, this is a semantic saturation one, i.e. the use of repetition causes

depletion of the emotional meaning of the words. Practically, it plays on the exalted language of Urdu poetry but diminishes it to the jolly rant, thus breaching Principle of Relevance (meaning is no longer rich but forced). Sociolinguistically, it comes in a comical way of criticizing how romantic poetry may get overdone or performative, especially when talking in everyday discourse or texting where everyone wants to sound poetic without a thing.

Joke 22

ہم بچپن بہن بھائی ہیں: لڑکی
کیا آپ کے گھر فیملی پلاننگ والے نہیں آتے؟: لڑکا
آئے تھے، سکول سمجھ کر واپس چلے گئے: لڑکی

Interpretation

This joke is based on wordplay, institutional confusion, mock logic. The girl feels like she has a sibling connection from childhood and the boy, jokingly says that her house needed family planning advice (i.e., less children). The sarcastic answer of the girl that the family planners confused the house with a school and went away is thus leading to the fact that they have so many children, it looked like a school. This joke is based on semantic ambiguity, "سکول سمجھ لیا" – a punchline that hints to overcrowding. Practically, the humor is based on conversational implicature. This institutional mix-up is meant to have the audience deduce that a big family is being ridiculed in the process. Sociolinguistically, the joke depicts South Asian concerns about a large family that are frequently played with humor based on the government family planning campaigns. It also reveals female verbal dexterity in exchanging barbs in defense of herself with rapid repartee, turning the teasing gibe upside down with a better one.

Joke 23

بابا کچھ دے دو بہت بھوکھا ہوں: فقیر
روپے کھلے ہیں تمہارے پاس؟ 50: آدمی
ہاں: فقیر
تو پہلے وہ تو ختم کرلو: آدمی

Interpretation

Semantic incongruity as well as a pragmatic violation of expectations are used in this joke for providing us with laughter. Most of the time, if an individual claims he is hungry and begging for food and money we assume that he or she is out of essential resources. But here the beggar himself concedes to possessing money (50 rupees), which is at odds with the impression that he tried to create when he first declared his severe need. In other words, the sarcastic proposition put forward by the man, "پہلے وہ تو ختم کرلو", goes against the cooperative principle, which is specifically the Maxim of Relevance of Grice, as it provides an unhelpful option. It is making fun on how "some beggars aren't as helpless as they seem", and the element of humor here does fit into the sociolinguistic stereotype of suspicion towards professional begging in South Asian settings.

Joke 24

گھاس کھانے سے آنکھوں کی روشنی بڑھتی ہے: پہلا پاگل
ٹھیک کہتے ہو، اسی لیے گھوڑے کو عینک لگانے کی ضرورت ہے: دوسرا پاگل

Interpretation

Absurd logic and semantic reversal are used in this joke. The first “پاگل” puts forward a ridiculous belief based on the folk wisdom eating grass enhances eyesight. The second “پاگل” answers in the mockingly serious manner, if that was the case, horses (who graze on grass) won’t need glasses. The humor is based on the purposeful abuse of logical inference which is the trademark of nonsense humour. There is also a sense of pragmatic irony, a reply pretending to be in agreement but fully contradicting the initial statement through exaggerated reasoning. This joke reflects that absurdity that is ordered in logic can work as a means for humor, especially when credited to mentally sick characters (“پاگل”), a common but a much argued topic when it comes to South Asian humor.

Joke 25

یار رات کو سورج کیوں نہیں لگتا؟: پہلا پاگل
کس نے کہا ہے کہ نہیں لگتا؟: دوسرا پاگل
تو نظر کیوں نہیں آتا؟: پہلا پاگل
اندھیرا ہوتا ہے، نظر کیسے آئے گا؟: دوسرا پاگل

Interpretation

This joke is based on semantic confusion and illogical thinking for a comic genre of expression. The question “لگتا؟ نہیں کیوں سورج کو رات” indicates a confusion on natural events. The answer adds to the foolishness by proposing that the sun possibly is still “on” but kept by the darkness. The second “پاگل” provides pseudo-scientific answer, pretending to be a rational explanation but is still nonsensical. The humor comes from a fake dialogue of the defunct process of reasoning, and both parties involved exhibit some kind of flawed logic that rings superficially right. It also playfully transgresses world knowledge norms – readers are aware of the fact that night is the time when sun is opposite of the Earth and not hidden by the darkness. By playing with the gap, the joke evokes laughter because of common knowledge and disconnected contrast.

Joke 26

کھا چاکلیٹ کی پسند تمہاری: لڑکا ہو؟ کرتے کیا تو ہے آتی یاد میری تمہیں جب: لڑکی
ہوں۔۔۔ لیتی لگا کش دو کے لیف گولڈ میں: لڑکی ہوں۔ لیتا

Interpretation

The contrastive humor here is employed through the lexical decision and the social expectations. The girl’s initial query is full of romantic anticipations and it is awaiting an emotional or loving response. The boy’s answer eating her favorite chocolate has got a little bit sweet, and leaves the impression of a chivalry contact. The punchline comes when, instead of providing such a sentimental response, little girl says that she smokes two puffs of Gold Leaf (Pakistani cigarette brand). In the semantic perspective, this introduces incongruity between the expectation and what happens. “Chocolates vs. cigarettes”, opposing symbols sweetness vs. bitterness, innocence vs. rebellion. Practically, the girl violates the Maxim of Manner and Maxim of Relation – she gives an unreasonable, socially prohibited answer, which is especially reprehensible for the women. Sociolinguistically, it challenges gender norms. The fact of women smoking is not welcome in the conservative Pakistani culture. The humor is based on the turn of social expectations upon women to be gentle and romantic

Joke 27

گی؟ ہو سے کس شادی میری ہوں کرتی پیار سے لڑکوں دو میں: لڑکی
گا۔ ہو دوسرا نصیب خوش گی، ہو سے والے پہلے شادی: پنڈت

Interpretation

Dramatic irony (a cliché) is featured here using the traditional format of a prophecy, traditionally taken seriously in the South Asian religious and astrological contexts. The girl tries to get a divine answer from پنڈت (Hindu priest) on whom will she get married to. There is a punchline when the پنڈت gives a double response. she'll marry a one but the "lucky one" will be the other- implying marriage to her is a bad luck. Ironically, the word "نصیب خوش" is semantic. It is generally positive in connotation, but in this case it rather means escaping from a problematic marriage. Pragmatically, the پنڈت's bluntness nullifies the expected reassuring spiritual guidance, making for humor. Sociolinguistically, it questions the fact that love triangles are romantic. Rather, it draws them as troubled, joking about modern confusion of relationships and the parched desire of seeking divine intervention.

Joke 28

I Love U: کہا کو صاحب مولوی نے لڑکی ایک
استغفر اللہ: مولوی
I Miss U: باللہ تعوذ: مولوی
Kiss اللہ بسم اللہ بسم: مولوی

Interpretation

This is a joke built along repetition and escalation to make fun. The girl challenges the مولوی's intransigence of religion with more and more romantic (haram) phrases. As in "Kiss," the مولوی, instead of resisting any further, all of a sudden gives in with "اللہ بسم اللہ بسم" (Let's begin in the name of God). Pragmatically, the مولوی steps out of his religious role and the Maxim of Quality (he pretends to be moral, but his reaction show hypocrisy). Semantically, the change from rejection of the religious order (باللہ تعوذ / استغفر اللہ) to acceptance (اللہ بسم) leaves a huge discrepancy. We can say sociolinguistically, it satirizes perceived hypocrisy in religious personalities; which is a regular in South Asian humor. It makes fun of the public virtue as the mask of private desire.

Joke 29

گی؟ چلے انگلش: لڑکا
گی۔۔۔ چلے بھی دیسی تو ہو ساتھ سوڈا اگر: لڑکی

Interpretation

This joke is good because it is based on double entendre. The boy wants to impress the girl by his command of English – the symbol of class and modernity. "گی؟ چلے انگلش" (Will English work?) – this is the example of the metaphor for sophisticated communication. The girl complies with a culturally-based play on words: "If soda is available, even local booze is ok" –that is what this means, namely, if soda is there, local drink is ok as well. "دیسی" (local) here means a language and alcohol. On a semantic level, it leverages on polysemy of "گی چلے" (will work) for language and alcohol. Pragmatically, it reveals the change of roles – the girl is more socially and culturally witty, and challenges the performance of the boy. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this joke combines

rural-urban difference in language and alcohol metaphor to camp class-based presumptions in South Asian flirting culture.

Joke 30

چاہیے؟ لڑکی کیسی تمہیں: لڑکی
کرے۔۔۔ خدمت دے، کھانا دے، پیار جو: لڑکا
رہیں۔۔۔ کر بس مل تینوں یہ: لڑکی

Interpretation

The use of semantic overload and gender role criticism in this joke identifies humor. The boy comes up with a list of perfect characteristics for a partner, in which love, cooking, and serving are considered to be distinct, obligatory functions. The girl wittily answers him and suggests he goes and marries three different women, because no woman can meet such unrealistic expectations. In a semantic perspective, the joke employs enumeration, and finally ends with the punchline in a summarizing tone. Pragmatically, it chooses to ignore expectations by providing a literal solution to a wish list that is figurative. Sociolinguistically, it challenges the way South Asian men tend to expect their wives to do multiple roles without them doing anything in return. The joke reminds the burden of being perfect women have.

Joke 31

سکوٹر کے ابو اور آٹا کو امی ہفتے ہر تو بے کرنی شادی سے مجھ تمہیں اگر: لڑکی
گا۔ ہو ڈلوانا پیٹرول میں
کہنا۔۔۔ سلام میرا کو ابو امی جی، بہن اچھا: لڑکا

Interpretation

This joke creates humor on the basis of social commentary and sudden withdrawal. This girl declares what might be termed as “conditions” for marriage, namely household groceries and fuel, implying dowry-like expectations. During the realization of the material cost, the boy saves himself gracefully and calls her “جی بہن” (sister) and says no indirectly. Pragmatically, the shift from the address of his romantic partner to “sister”: breaks the frame, by using the speech act theory to reframe the relationship. Sociolinguistically, it focuses on Pakistani marriages and pressures they have from the economy, and it criticizes the aspect where even affection comes with finances.

Joke 32

کیا؟ صاف فریج: بیگم
تھے۔ مزیدار بہت تو انگور اور آم کر خاص ہاں، جی: نوکرانی

Interpretation

Here lexical ambiguity is used in the joke for humor. The mistress refers to “cleaning the fridge” in the sanitary way. The maid takes it as “consume the contents”. Semantically, ‘کرنا صاف’ means, ‘to clean’, additionally ‘empty’ or ‘consumed’ (colloquial: especially in Urdu humor). Practically, the joke brings the Maxim of Quantity into disregard, considering that the answer is more than expected and that the maid does not understand the norms of roles. Sociolinguistically, it captures class misunderstandings and cultural lacuna of expectations on the part of the employers and domestic workers.

Joke 33

تھا۔ گیا گر سے چھت میں جناب: نوکر
ہے؟ لگتی کہاں دیر اتنی میں گرنے: مالک

Interpretation

This is a good old time logic joke. The employee provides a major excuse, but the employer pays attention to its temporal improbability, without considering the gravity of the situation. On a semantic level, the joke is based on the mismatch of time: falling is a brief movement, while delay implies an exaggeration or pretense. Pragmatically, the boss' s sarcastic response makes people laugh since the requirement to obey Maxim of Sympathy (missing expected concern) is violated. Sociolinguistically, it shows the way sufferings of laborers are generally ignored or disregarded in hierarchical setups.

Joke 34

بچے؟ یا بے دینا انڈے شیر: پاگل پہلا
ہے؟ پڑتا فرق کیا بچے یا دے انڈے ہے، بادشاہ: دوسرا

Interpretation

The nonsense logic and irrelevant reasoning in this joke is used to make it funny. The first question is scientifically ridiculous, and the following one answers it in terms of social logic – being king allows the lion to escape the biological laws. From a semantic perspective the joke compares the facts of zoology with the social labels (“بادشاہ”). Pragmatically, it goes against the Maxim of Relevance, and results in absurd humor. Sociolinguistically it mocks the fact that in the south Asian society, and especially in the Indian one, titles (on such as “بادشاہ”) trump logic or merit creating metaphoric remark on power and privilege.

Joke 35

گا۔ لگاؤں نہیں شرط میں اب: پہلا
ہو؟ رہے قائم پر بات اپنی کبھی تم: دوسرا
شرط او لگا تو ہے بات ایسی: پہلا

Interpretation

This joke uses circular irony. The first friend claims that he will no longer bet, but again contradicts himself by taking up a bet to prove he doesn't take bets. From the semantic point of view, it is a self-defeating argument, i.e., a paradox. Pragmatically it goes against Maxim of Consistency in a short sequence contradiction. Sociolinguistically, it portrays impulses and peer pressure, which is predominant among male friendships in desi culture.

Joke 36

انسان؟ ور طاقت سے سب کا دنیا
ہے۔ لیتا روک گاڑیاں سینکڑوں سے ہاتھ ایک جو سپاہی، کا ٹریفک

Interpretation

This joke is a literal example of exaggerating authority of a traffic warden. Physically weak but symbolically strong – anybody can stall huge machines with a hand signal made by the warden.

Semantically, it is exploiting the difference between literal and figurative meaning of “طاقتور” (powerful). Pragmatically it plays on irony – what is expected might be a bodybuilder or superhero

but the irony is bureaucratic power. Sociolinguistically, it is a sign of respect and ridiculing for the state authorities in South Asian everyday life.

Joke 37

گاہو کامیاب اپریشن: مریض
ہوں۔ رہا کر اپریشن تو لیے کے دیکھنے بھی: ڈاکٹر

Interpretation

This joke has medical uncertainty as punchline. Instead of reassurance the doctor provides his experiment as his motive thereby, making the patient a guinea pig. Semantically, it mocks professional detachment. Practically, it contradicts the Maxim of Politeness/Relation, where the answer given is honest but inappropriate. Sociolinguistically, it is an expression of lack of trust in medical systems and doctor-patient intercourse in desi societies.

Joke 38

گری۔ میں کھائی ماں کی مولوی
لی۔ کھول وی دی دی ابے دی، نہیں بھی اپنی نے خدا: مولوی

Interpretation

Emotional reversal and irony are the animals used in this joke. Rather than mourning the fall of his mother, the مولوی sarcastically comments on divine justice, pointing out that not even God was merciful to Himself. As for the semantic sense, “لی کھول وی دی ابے” (opened His own veil) hints at the loss or betrayal, while turning the spiritual term into sarcastic one. Sociolinguistically, it criticizes blind religiosity and cultural fatalism- using folk wisdom to make light of tragic events.

Joke 39

تھا۔ کہا کو کھلانے کو مرغی تمہیں نے میں ہو رہے کھلا کیوں کو بلی چاول تم: مالک
تو مرغی جناب وہ اس کے پیٹ میں ہے۔

Interpretation

An employer calls for his/her servant many times. The servant comes late in a limping and explains he fell from a roof. The employer quips, “How does it take so long to fall from the roof?” The humor emanates from the employer’s deadpan attention for the temporal impossibility rather than the injury of the servant. Semantically, it is infinitely short as “falling” is almost instant, so the delay violates the state of affairs. Pragmatically, the boss violates the Maxim of Sympathy – offers a sarcastic reproof rather than sympathy. Socioculturally, it portrays the manner in which the working class suffering is easily ignored in unequal ties making a painful moment an ironical joke.

Joke 40

گئی ہو ختم فلم ہوئی۔ ظلم کوئی وہی اے ہیں لے بولا۔ ایک تو ہوئی ختم فلم تھے۔ رہے دیکھ فلم ٹائٹلک دوست پنجابی دو
آیا۔ نہیں راہی سلطان پر

Interpretation

This joke is about two friends, Punjabis watching the movie Titanic. When the film is over, one of them responds with frustration: “This is great injustice – the film ended, and Sultan Rahi did not appear”. Here the humour results from the cultural contradiction and incongruity and pragmatic

inconsistency. Titanic is a famous romantic tragedy which occurred in real life across the globe while Sultan Rahi was a great action hero of Pakistani origin who also acted muscular roles in the Punjabi cinema. The punchline is based on semantic and cultural assumptions. The friend expected Sultan Rahi to show in a Hollywood movie just because for him, no film is complete without such a hero character. Pragmatically, this is a violation of Maxim of Relevance as the author's attempts to impose an illogical localized frame of reference on other people's narrative. Socioculturally, the joke points to the extent to which regional on-screen personalities such as Sultan Rahi are rooted in the local imaginations to the point that viewers may anticipate their appearance even where they are obviously out of place. It is this gap between the expectations of culture and the narrative reality that renders the joy.

Conclusion

The study reveals an intricate interplay of linguistic, cultural, and cognitive factors constructing humor. Most of the humor relies on semantic contradiction, violations of pragmatic such as Grice's maxims, and sociocultural scripts. These jokes are effective not only because of their structure but also because they speak to culturally shared knowledge, stereotype, and localized humor norms. One of the findings is related to the role of the sociolinguistic familiarity like allusions to gender roles, religion, class or celebrities add relatability and criticize the society norms. Code-switching and idiomatic language are additionally used for extended comic effect as well as identity and social dynamics. After all, Urdu jokes are a window to Pakistan's linguistic ingenuity and cultural morality. They are not just comedy, they seem to serve as tools of social commentary and identity negotiations. Future research could take the form of multimodal humor, audience reception, or cross-linguistic comparisons which could widen humor's linguistic and cultural functions. There are several areas for further research to develop from this study. It may be possible that a multimodal analysis of Urdu humor in memes and digital media can unravel the combination of visual and textual elements. Audience reception studies may reveal the reception of humour among various groups of people. Cross-linguistic comparisons with languages such as Hindi or English, can reveal universal as opposed to culture-specific humor tactics. More investigation could be conducted on the role of gender and power dynamic, political satire, and code-switching in humor to better comprehend social critique and identity. Examination of corpora can reveal general linguistic patterns, whereas roles of humor in language learning, interpretation of law, and emotional well-being feature a fertile interdisciplinary prospect.

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