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# Humor 2.0: Memes Discourse and the Algerian Youth Culture

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for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture*

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In the name of Allah,

Praises only belongs to allah almighty, the lord of the universe

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With all respect, love and happiness, I dedicate this work:

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## **Abstract**

Memes have become so popular among Algerian youth nowadays as a common socio-discursive practice. Accordingly, the current research is carried out to discover memes as an online discourse and its relationship to the Algerian youth culture. More precisely, it aims at describing how humor is created through these memes and the way it reflects the Algerian Youth culture. The study relied on the multimodal semiotic approach in analyzing discourse. The corpora of the study consisted of 400 memes collected from four Algerian popular humor pages on Instagram. Results revealed that memes creation can be classified into four categories: cartoon, textual, daily activities, famous figure and animal category. Moreover, it has been found that memes are loaded with socio-cultural aspects of the Algerian culture and the discursive practices in memes function as mirrors of specific cultures. The findings of this research reflect the peculiarity of online humor, and strengthen the power of humor discourse to create and display social and cultural aspects in given societies and cultures. Thus, it can be studied as a tool to understand human behaviours and cultures in human and social sciences.

**Key words:** Algerian youth culture, discourse, humor, memes, multimodal semiotics.



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## **General introduction**

A discourse can be defined as an ongoing discussion, it can also be thought as a conversation that is distributed through a whole society. Discourse studies is an approach that deals with the analysis of verbal or nonverbal language use, or any significant semiotic event. Discourse analysis (DA) have witnessed a development over the last decades especially with the appearance of the mass media. People nowadays are creating media product that are related to a particular discourse and feeds into it, for instance humour online and the best example of it is memes that are widely spread on social media. Memes have become a part of this distributed ideas and become one of the discursive voices that reflect consciously or unconsciously the culture of these specific societies. Which is the case with Young Algerian, this generation of youth are engaging in these trend which is the memes by sharing their thoughts, values and even their culture through them in a hilarious way and by using different mechanism that differs from one society to another.

### **Statement of the problem**

Memes are a convenient way to share information and ideas with others, and they can be a powerful tool for creating and sharing content. Memes can be used to promote a certain message that belongs to a certain culture. This topic has been studied in many western countries, and extensive research has been carried out to investigate memes in various ways and in different contexts. However, in the Algeria culture context, this issue has not received enough, meticulous analysis from scholars, despite of the huge spread of memes all over the internet recently, and their important socio-cultural discursive roles. Thus, this study addresses the topic of humour 2.0 in memes as a social practice in the Algerian context. More precisely, it sheds some light on the ways humour is created in the memes discourse online and the role it plays

in reflecting the social and cultural aspects of the Algerian youth culture, as an attempt to further research on online discourse and media studies in general.

### **Research objectives**

Given the research problem stated earlier, the objectives targeted in this study are as follows:

- To structurally and contextually analyze the humor discourse in memes.
- To investigate how humor in memes reflect the Algerian Youth culture

### **Research questions**

Based on the previous mentioned issue and in order to fully comprehend this phenomenon, we advocate investigating the relationship between memes and Algerian youth culture ; thus, we came across the process of providing answers to the following question :

- 1- What are the discursive strategies used in these memes to create humour ?
- 2- How is it tied to Algerian youth culture ?

### **Research Method**

This study falls within discourse analysis research and is qualitatively-oriented. Given its objectives, the multimodal semiotic method has been employed in data collection and analysis. The memes data have been collected from four popular Algerian Instagram pages #beauty\_algerianne, #first\_thought1, #3ich\_tchouf, and #routine\_dz of memes. Sampling was conducted randomly, and the size of the sample has been determined by the saturation approach. At the level of saturation, 400 memes were collected. They were later coded and analyzed to investigate the humour discourse structure and its socio-cultural aspects.

### **Significance of the study**

This research study is significant for a couple of reasons. First, the current situation of the discourse of memes in Algeria has witnessed a huge development among the youth in the last ten years. The discourse of memes used by the Algerian youth distinguishably differs from the one used in other countries, this discourse reflects the cultural, social and political circumstances of the Algerian society. Therefore, it is necessary to find out how Algerian memes reflect the youth culture.

### **Structure of the study**

The research paper is composed of two main chapters. The first one includes the literature review. It gives an overview about our topic and introduces the previous studies and literature that have been conducted thus far about our topic. It ends with exposing the research gap in the literature. The second is devoted to the research method, results, and discussion. This chapter highlights the method of research, including research design, sampling and data collection. It also reports the results and then discusses them.

***Chapter One:  
Literature Review***

## **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the literature review that is automatically related to the subject. It represents previous studies that tackled the same topic and has relation to the same theme, which is discourse of memes and their effects on culture in. The studies are ordered chronologically, and shed light on the topic, method and key findings of each work.

## **1.2 Previous Literature on Humour Discourse and Memes**

One of the earliest studies that tackled the topic of memes on social media was in 2012 by Ryan Miler, who studied the First World Problems (FWP) and Third World Success (TWS) memes. They argued that :

CDA is an appropriate method for analyzing these particular memes for a number of reasons. First of all, the FWP and TWS memes contain both explicit and implicit political and ideological content due to their association with the “first world” and “third world” concepts as well as the theme of economic inequality inherent in the memes’ content. As practiced by Fairclough and others, CDA is rooted in an expressed political commitment, and the application of the method is concerned with examining language and discursive practices to uncover the meaning created by historical, social, and political contexts. Furthermore, studies employing CDA are frequent.

According to this dissertation, there are several websites that collect Internet memes. Meme Generator (<http://memegenerator.net/>) is where all of the samples examined in this study were gathered. Meme Generator compiles existing meme examples and offers picture templates for users to utilize in making new memes. Meme Generator was selected as the study's sole source of memes since it hosts a considerably bigger amount of memes than other meme aggregator websites. The author decided that the 48 memes in the Meme Generator collection were sufficient to serve as the study's full sample, and that using just one website would have the

added advantage of reducing the possibility of picking duplicate memes. Meme Generator provided 6,498 FWP examples as of November 12, 2012.

The ideological components of the First World Problems (FWP) and Third World Success (TWS) Internet memes were examined using the theory and practice of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The paper studies the visual and textual components of a sample of the FWP and TWS memes using analytical concepts from CDA and related approaches, such as multimodal discourse analysis and social semiotics. The research makes the claim that the memes' language and imagery are ideologically significant and discursively create oppositional binary distinctions between "us" and "them" in terms of the income gap.

T.T. Sreekumar and Shobha Vadrevu conducted another significant study in 2013. The study's primary focus was on the usage of static visual online memes by political actors in Singapore to deliver messages criticizing the ruling party and its policies.

The discussion in this paper is based on semiotic analysis of a few memes as well as interviews with Singaporeans between the ages of 18 and 24 about how they react to memes. The goal is to understand how the spread of memes may affect the effectiveness of political engagement methodology. A semiotic examination of a few memes shared by political players on Facebook was the first step in the study. Five Facebook pages with this material were located. Two of them contained links to socio-political websites that also contained other content, like articles and reports<sup>1</sup>. Both were renowned for serving as independent media outlets to the state-run mainstream press. Daily, they uploaded several things to their Facebook sites, and the majority of them attracted a lot of comments. The posts themselves were diverse, encompassing both serious and humorous content.

The conversations surrounding each post were often polemical and informal. When memes were posted, therefore, they were not seen as incongruent. Memes that specifically dealt with

political issues were selected based on their portrayal of people and issues related to the political sphere in Singapore

T.T. Sreekumar and Shobha Vadrevu (2013) « From this small corpus of Singaporean online political memes, 3 were selected for a detailed semiotic analysis based on their appropriateness for offering insight into the manner in which they employed intertextuality to embed political messages into common meme formats and attempted to resonate with their audiences. »

In the second phase of the study, 20 young Singaporeans between the ages of 18 and 24 were interviewed. They were questioned about their general media consumption, their social media usage, their political activity, and their particular perceptions of internet memes. During the interview, participants were asked to log into their social media accounts so they could discuss their beliefs and usage patterns in relation to actual posts and conversations. This "interview-plus" method assisted in jogging participants' memories and providing the researchers with context for the data.

However, recent studies outlined by Anastasia Denisova in 2016 suggested that Memes serve as the universal language of the Internet, allowing users to discuss any subject while also influencing political debate with mind-bombs. This study concentrated on how memes were used to discuss the Crimean conflict on Russian Twitter in 2014. Both pro- and anti-government activists have used this writing format to further their causes and offer interpretations on current events.

Anastasia (2016) claimed that « the role of the Internet memes in political deliberation of the Crimean crisis contributed to the under-studied field of political uses of memes in a non-Western authoritarian environment. »

Recent thinking on Internet memes, tactical activism, connective action, carnivalesque resistance, individual action frames, and creativity for politics are all part of the conceptual

framework. Memes function as the inside jokes of digital communities, but this study has shown that they are restricted in the sophistication of the ideas they can represent and in maintaining a long-term relevant dialogue. Memes are more likely to act as disruptive mind-bombs that connect ideas than they are to function as disruptive mind-bombs that connect people. This is because their ambiguity and anonymity hinder community development while fostering the transmission of ideas.

This study sought to investigate the function of memes in Russia's online political resistance. Mixed methodologies, including content analysis, social network analysis, textual analysis, and interviews, were used in this study.

Content analysis, social network analysis, textual analysis, and interviews were all used in this study. She also combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In-depth interviews with meme sharers and textual analysis of memes made up the qualitative portion of this study.

Semiotic analysis was thought to be a workable method for the investigation on Internet memes in this study, which used a grounded theory and inductive methodology. During the data collecting process, the study located over 2,000 memes (images and phrases). Years later Nejma Akhther 2017 conducted this research to examine how memes operate as rhetoric to explore the intercultural communication and identity construction being represented in such participatory media culture. It is specially targeted to identify the inter-textual nature of memes as a unique form of cultural discourse which has been shared by the Bangladeshi Facebook prosumers.

Nejma 2017 examined Internet memes, concentrating in particular on how visuals, text, and meanings relate to one another utilizing semiotics to create social messages, political messages, universal feelings, or even just to be humorous and delight its users.

The semiotic and discourse methodologies have been used to analyze the study's content. These techniques were picked because they both entail disassembling a sign or text in order to reveal

any potential hidden meanings. Semiotics is the study of how meanings are stored and transmitted through the interaction of signs, such as words and images, in order to analyze cultural artifacts.

On the other hand, Michel Foucault, who provides insight into the relationship between texts and discourses, is extensively referenced in the cultural lineage of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis and social semiotics share a concern for how individuals interpret cultural products, but social semiotics also considers visual and aural cues in addition to words and language. A combination of both techniques seems to be the optimum strategy because an internet meme frequently consists of both an image (sign) and a caption (text). The study uses the analysis of memes to take a micro-level discursive approach to understanding the themes at play in larger, cultural-level discourses. Other meme researchers share the view that memes can be used as cultural analysis tools.

The current study demonstrates the social semiotics perspective that cultural meanings are created and communicated through the interaction of signs ; the artifacts being analyzed in this study include textual and visual elements, and cultural discourse analysis is being used to look at internet memes as cultural artifacts.

A meme, as defined by Richard Dawkins, is "a concept, behavior, or style that spreads from individual to individual inside a society," according to theories put forth by David Wilson, Nepul Raj A1, Dr. Jayaprakash D2, and Kinza Mushfiq. Images, according to Dawkins, are a form of social proliferation that allow people to share social memories and ideas with one another. Every concept that crosses the mind from the psyche is an image.

The study demonstrated how Internet memes have become so out of control for young people that cartoons and characters from kid-friendly movies are being misappropriated. They will eventually adopt any meme, regardless of whether it is a societal issue or a joke about a racist.

Kinza asserted in 2017 that Internet memes are out of control for young people to the point where cartoon characters and those from children's movies are being utilized in derogatory ways... Due to its popularity, it will become increasingly difficult to govern the viral tool as time goes on. On the other hand, he contends that memes are a means of communicating comedy and sarcasm to the general audience. Today, a single unflattering or amusing photo of a celebrity can spark many memes. When people see an uncommon or attention-grabbing deed or simply a conversation on social media, whether it's about their personal lives or merely an expression.

This article looks at memes to see who is being made fun of on social media and to see if memes are having a psychological impact on our kids. To examine if memetics may be applied to marketing in order to thoroughly explicate and comprehend the meme theory, as well as to examine the memes in light of their enormous popularity in Pakistan.

As organized by the investigative world view, Kinza implied the art of strategies and contained the metrics and standards used to control the decision, structure, method, and application of approaches. Reviewing or presenting strategies is known as strategy. The term "methodology" refers to the methodologies and uniform methodology used to carry out an examination plan or strategy.

This study was undertaken in 2018 by Neneng Zubaida and Irena Ardelia to examine the relationship between the visual and text in memes in relation to their meaning and social function. The goal of the study was to determine the deep meaning or purpose of memes.

The study used the Google image search term "best memes" as a sample and randomly selected five well-known and top memes. Based on the requirements of this research, the memes are chosen at random. Then, using the memes as examples, critical discourse analysis was used to analyze them.

Nenege 2018 mentioned that Abdul Aziz Turhan Kariko from the English Department of Binus University had completed the first related study in 2013 with the title *Analysis on Internet Memes Using Semiotics*.

The research topic for this study was "What are the deep meanings of the memes ? " Critical discourse analysis, or CDA, was utilized as the research design. Also, "What are the goals of memes?" The writers initially looked up the most well-known and well-liked memes on the internet by searching for them in Google Images with the keyword "best memes." Following the appearance of all memes via Google Images, the author selected five at random memes based on the requirements of this research.

The writers had to ensure that the memes were already widely spread on the internet before selecting them at random to differentiate them based on their aims. The frequency with which memes are spread can reveal this. The writer then responded to the research question by describing the context of the memes after selecting the five memes at random as the sample for the study. It was done by examining the image and the text within the memes to determine their significance. The writer then discovered the profound meaning behind each meme, and the final step in addressing the study topic was discovering the motivation behind each meme. The entire data analysis process for this study was carried out using critical discourse analysis.

The study concentrated on the use of the following methodologies : the speech act approach, interactional sociolinguistics, the ethnography of communication, pragmatic methodology, conversation analysis, variationist methodology, and systemic functional linguistics (SFL)

In her 2018 study, *Meme or Not to Meme*, Jessica Terry made the compelling case that humor is essential to human interaction because it gives people a way to express their ideas, thoughts, and emotions. Additionally, people utilize it to signify their membership in a social group or

relationship. There are two main theories of humor that cover the functions of humor in interpersonal relationships, as Kutz-Flamenbaum points out.

Jess discovered Richard Dawkins, a scientist, originally used the term "meme" to describe the cultural counterpart to biological genes. "An element of a culture or system of conduct that may be considered to be conveyed from one individual to another through non-genetic mechanisms, especially imitation," is the formal definition given by Google.

This dissertation argued that there are some ambiguities in the way the term "meme" is used to describe cultural components. The word is most frequently used to describe amusing photos with captions, a usage that is supported by social media. These frames are then employed in various literary situations while still evoking an acknowledging laugh.

This study sought to classify several meme types in relation to both offline and online culture. 25 picture repetition (C2) memes from seven Instagram popular meme accounts have been chosen in order to do this. This study examines this kind of meme in order to pinpoint the essential humor elements that are being used as well as the effects of these memes on how individuals construct their identities within a group.

Gathering pertinent literature on subjects like social media, comedy, self-identity, and memes was the first step in the investigation. Five variations of each of the five chosen frame-repeating memes—a total of twenty-five memes—were then chosen. The memes are intended to limit researcher bias. The memes were chosen without taking into account the captions from seven public meme accounts on Instagram, each with at least one million followers. The memes were then examined to identify their common themes, literary devices, and language patterns.

In 2019, David Wilson suggested that the Oxford Online Dictionary's original definition of the word "meme" was "an idea, behavior, style, or usage that transmits from person to person within a culture". Later, the internet meme was also incorporated. In his book *Decolonising the Mind*,

the African author Ngugi wa Thiong'o claims that "language, by way of communication, is the carrier of culture". If this theory is accepted, memes which, by definition, are culture-specific would be one of the finest ways to teach language. David asserted that a language's discourses reflect its culture. One learns the culture of a country while studying its language. One learns the culture of a language by studying it. The culture that is embedded in internet memes is thought to be shared when such memes are shared. Memes are a modern illustration of how culture is exchanged over the internet, which is a mashup of all the world's civilizations. Cheung discovered that popular culture inspires both educators and learners, and she suggested that educators develop additional materials based on popular culture for use in ESL classrooms. The sociocultural theory of language learning supports the use of memes in the classroom.

This study made reference to Memes mainly reference movies and television shows, particularly the lines spoken by well-known characters. Films are seen favorably by researchers as a means of teaching English. Films, according to Billson, are a powerful source of language instruction.

This article showed that A meme's ability to "not take itself seriously" is its most appealing trait. However, in order to effectively employ memes as a teaching tool, a teacher must take them seriously and be receptive to the numerous ways they might be applied. In order to educate culture alongside language in a setting where foreign languages are taught, Lin utilizes constructivism theory through films.

Through the use of digital tools and approaches, this study aimed to solve the problem of the generation gap in teaching pupils. Computers and other digital technologies were introduced in the classroom. With promising results, the overhead projector has taken the place of the black and white board. The teaching-learning process is aided by the use of projectors to display images, films, and other graphic information.

Michela Canepari 2019 in her article aimed to investigate the phenomena of memes as a communicative, social, and cultural output in an effort to gauge the degree to which the cultures and communities that produce them are becoming more globally and locally oriented.

The article provides a selection of memes from Italy and the UK that were assembled into a sizable corpus, along with a brief linguistic and visual analysis of each meme. The quantitative analysis of the corpus will not be described in detail here due to space constraints, though the study's findings will be briefly mentioned.

However, the qualitative study of some of the memes will show that a significant portion of the existing material - while embracing many elements of globalization - often exploits, from a linguistic point of view, regional variances of the language chosen. The analysis shows how, despite globalization, local (and localized) elements of communities and cultures continue to persist in their uniqueness since language is the manifestation of particular civilizations. The results therefore point to a generation of youth that, despite the propensity to adopt global models, is well aware of the traditional and local cultures they stem from and works to preserve them. This is because memes, as stated in the title of this paper, are a preferred form of communication among younger members of society.

The article concludes with the claim that, based on this analysis, memes, like many other products of popular culture, represent a privileged arena that, if systematically studied using the tools of discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, could reveal significant aspects of the societies that produce them and their evolution.

Michela Canepari By definition, Memes are unquestionably global phenomena because they perpetuate some of the symbols and cultural icons that define a particular historical age in a globe that seems to be getting smaller and smaller. However, this argument contends that from

a linguistic and, generally speaking, cultural perspective, they concurrently become localization strongholds.

It is obvious that He had to make extremely discerning decisions that were, at least in part, personal in order to gather information that could lead to meaningful results. He therefore made an effort to compile the corpus as methodically as possible, identifying various categories of memes (one of which was then chosen for in-depth analysis in this article), in an effort to see how these topics are treated in the memes coming from various nations and, when possible, various towns.

In the same year 2019 in Algeria (Ouargla), Ali Arif Khaled Moulay argued that Internet users translate memes on various platforms for a variety of reasons, including to entertain and offer comedy from one culture to another, to transmit an idea from one language to another, or to introduce a new notion to the intended audience. A translator could have difficulties in the middle of it because of cultural aspects and language-specific devices that do not exist in the target language and result in untranslatable material. This study disproves the idea that when cultural comedy in internet memes gets translated into the target language, it loses its novelty. Additionally, it asserted that the idea of translating internet memes is not novel ; it already exists on the internet. On Facebook and Instagram, people manage pages that are just focused on.

Ali Arif Khaled Moulay has mentioned also in his dissertation tries to explore the concepts and transmission of memes in terms of an evolutionary model. But since its early days, Memetics has drawn constant criticism from a variety of fronts concerning its notion that academic study can examine memes empirically.

This dissertation asserted that Internet memes could be mistakenly thought of as nothing more than jokes and amusing images that only serve to make their readers chuckle. Internet memes today, however, have a significant influence on how people think and live their lives due to the

advent of the internet and how it is now present in every part of our life. They have become a very effective instrument for influencing public thought and popular culture. They have a significant influence that is felt in numerous industries.

The study aimed to analyze the challenges that a translator can have when translating internet memes and makes an effort to address these challenges by implementing compensating mechanisms and other recommended methods to get the same hilarious effect in the target language.

Ali in his dissertation used Compensation as “a special method that is used to reach the equivalence when there is no equivalent concept and suitable expression in the target language” according to Cui (2012), There are five ways to get paid : borrowing, claque, paraphrase, adaptation, and translator's note.

In 2021, the dissertation argued the internet began to change, memes became dynamic, their effects increased, as well as its effects on the younger, more active generations. As meme usage has increased, new ideologies and subcultures have been invited by the dynamic nature of the medium. This new period of ideological plasticity, which was utilized in a variety of sociopolitical domains, was considered as a benefit to the growing diversity. Sharing original and humorous ideas that cater to people with similar brain processes remained the major goal.

A new era of passive ideological exchange in politics began today with the introduction of this new communication medium. The mode's normalcy has aided in its acquisition of a sense of staple conditioning among its users. We might further infer from a rigorous examination of the communicative identity of "political memes" that they serve as an unconscious tool for persuasion and generalization.

Ali stated that the spread of political memes has sparked interest among young people in their increasingly technologically reliant way of life. It shapes slowly but strongly, leaving a freckled

trail in its wake. In the area of subliminal persuasion and political propagandism, this topic continues to be an intriguing conundrum that is debatably well supported yet still new to draw conclusions.

Syed Mohammad Saad and Anjlika Verma claimed that Young people are being encouraged to adopt a more technologically savvy lifestyle by the proliferation of political memes. It takes time to form, is strong, and leaves a slender trail in its wake. Even if it is controversially well supported and only recently came to a resolution, this problem is still a fascinating puzzle in the field of political propagandism and subliminal persuasion.

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of political memes as a technique for influencing young people's political engagement on social media platforms.

The researcher used A qualitative study and was conducted on 10 participants falling in the category of youth to analyze their views, concepts, opinions and experiences on the effects of political memes ; over a period of time

In 2021 Dr. Roza Norstrom and Dr. Pawel Sarna tried to look into the topic of memes from several angles and analyze how Covid-19 was told and transmitted through Internet memes, as well as how they portrayed the outbreak and people in charge of containing it. A comparative narrative analysis and content analysis with framing elements were used to examine 1,763 memes from six media platforms.

The findings demonstrated that the memes served as a kind of reflection on the circumstances faced by Poles. The main protagonists in the memes were regular people, who were frequently comedically portrayed as being irresponsible with the virus and breaking the rules.

They were also painted as government and police victims. Furthermore, the individuals in charge of combating the pandemic were shown to be ineffective and to have imposed unnecessary harsh restrictions and consequences for disobeying them.

Mixed methods were used to conduct the study's ability to address the study's research questions and achieve its research goals. They used content analysis with framing elements to analyze the memes they had gathered. They employed comparative story analysis at the second stage of the research where they looked at memes compiled from six distinct sources. The primary study methodology was content analysis ; supplementary methods included framing and narrative analysis. Using the MAXQDA and Microsoft Excel programs, we examined the memes.

In this study, A total of 1,763 Covid-19-related memes from six different media were examined. In the study, a mixed-methods research approach was used, which enabled us to assess the memes in two steps. Our initial definition of memes included a list of six major categories, each of which was further broken down into subcategories to make the range of each category more clear.

In-depth descriptions of the categories and subcategories are provided in the results. A preliminary examination of the memes and pandemic-related subjects mentioned in the mainstream media served as the basis for the definition of thematic groups. Most of the memes focused on the same limitations, which can imply a form of consensus and thus be a manifestation of participatory culture. According to this study, memes shared by Internet users and occasionally by the organizations can spread quickly, giving people the chance to influence others and express their thoughts. Some frames and storylines can be transmitted from online to traditional media, and the media agenda can affect public opinion. This is true not only when it comes to political opinions, but also for the possibility of learning certain behaviors.

Didan Haryadi, Sari Rejeki, Agnes Setyowati in 2022 conducted this study to analyse Instagram memes' use of ambiguous words. Using a qualitative-descriptive methodology, this study. There are 21 unclear terms used in memes that were gathered between August 2020 and August 2021. According to the analysis's findings, lexical ambiguity can be used as a component to

spice up memes with humor. Through the use of words with many meanings and the incongruity principle, amusing memes are made through creating misunderstandings or errors.

The memes in This study are taken from several accounts on Instagram such as @9gag, @punhunonline, @drawtism, and @katalystcomics .It is clear that lexical ambiguity can be a humorous device in memes. Lexical ambiguity is only used in the data presented above for comic effect. In order to generate misconceptions or errors that add humor to the memes, words with numerous meanings are employed.

. The meme uses non-verbal humor as its primary form of humor. This study showed that Internet memes take the form of a mash-up of images, photos, presentations, and texts that are meant to address a topic that is being addressed in public conversation. Instagram is only one of the several social media sites that users use to share memes online. Instagram is a social media platform where different visual media, including both photographs and videos, are displayed. Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger founded Instagram.

The primary source of information for researching the denotative and secondary meaning is the Oxford Online Dictionary of English. By examining the context of the words, the meanings of the words are also examined.

The research conducted above shows that memes are one of the most powerful tools for disseminating information and ideas. Others discuss the role of memes in digital political resistance in Russia (Anastasia Demisova, 2016). She used a hybrid approach combining grounded theory and inductive reasoning. (Kinza Mushfiq, 2017) She talks about the psychological effects of memes on young people on her social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Other research has also addressed the issue of homomorphic discourse in internet memes as a tool for EFL education (David Wilson,2019), another important study titled influences on humour and identity in today's youth culture (Jessica terry,2018) , she

selected 25 memes from the most popular meme account on Instagram . (Dr. Roza Norstrom and Dr. Pawel Sarna 2021) tried to investigate the subject of memes from different angles and to analyze how Covid-19 was communicated and narrated through Internet memes using the mixed method. Also (Didan Haryadi, Sari Rejeki, Agnes Setyowati 2022) argued and conducted this study to analyze lexical ambiguity in memes on Instagram. They used a qualitative descriptive method. Moreover the researcher Alif Khaled Moulay, (2019) studies the memes and their wordy scripts as a challenge for the translator in Ouargla Algeria using a special method called the compensation method suggested by (Cui ,2012). After reviewing the previous studies, and to the best of our knowledge, the topic of memes as reflection of the Algeria youth culture has not yet been addressed as a variable in any of the available studies so far. Nevertheless, only a limited study has been done on the topic of memes. Studies done by Anastasia Demisova ; 2016 & kinda Mushfiq ,2017 & David Wilson ,2019 & Alif Moulay ,2019 has been focusing on the memes from political and historical perspective, and have been using a very small number of samples others have not analyzed the memes in the Algerian society. And for the studies which were done here in Algeria, Arif Moulay 2019 did not explain how memes are used as a virtual tool to reflect the Algeria youth culture. This study aimed to fill this research gap by gathering more data and more explanations of the topic of memes in the Algerian youth culture.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

Based on the previous studies, memes are one of the most effective tools for spreading ideas and information. They have been studied from an early time using different methods.

***Chapter Two:  
Method, Results and  
Discussion***

## **Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with the method, results and discussion of the findings of the study. Thus, it is divided into three sections. The first section introduces the method selected in conducting the present study through explaining sampling, the data collection procedures, the study corpora, and the analytical framework. The second section reports the results of the study, and the third one discusses the findings and their significance.

### **2.1. Method**

In this study we adopted qualitative research design rather than quantitative one because the focus of the research is on discourse structure and meaning creation.

#### **2.1.1. Objectives**

This research aimed at the following :

- 1- To identify the different categories of memes
- 2- To find out the discursive meaning behind the memes
- 3- To investigate the relationship between memes and Algerian youth culture

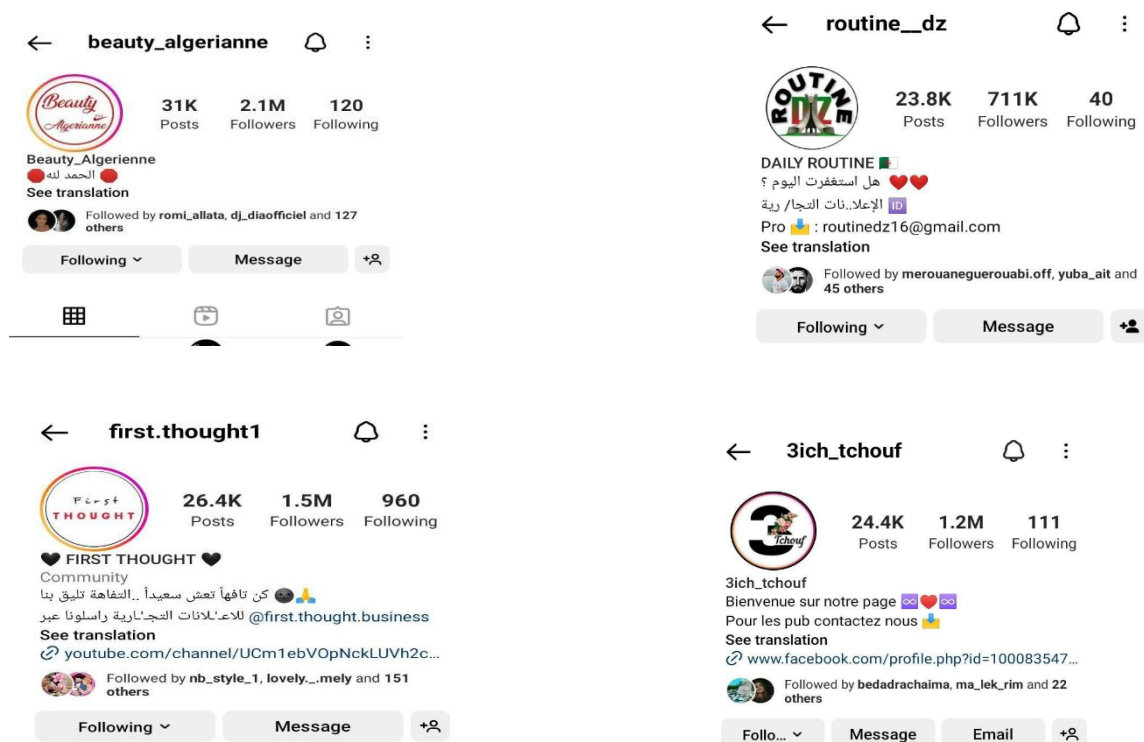
#### **2.1.2. Research questions**

- 1- What are the discursive strategies used in these memes to create humour ?
- 2- How are memes tied to Algerian youth culture ?
- 3- What are the different categories of memes that can be found on Instagram ?

#### **2.1.3. Sampling and Study Corpora**

Given the research nature and objectives, the data required for the study was in the form of memes. The data in our corpora was collected from four famous Algerian pages on

instagram: #beauty\_algerianne, #first\_thought1, #3ich\_tchouf, and #routine\_dz (as shown in figure 2.1 below). The justification behind selecting those pages is because they are the most visited pages on instagram, and they have a huge number of followers of more than one million followers per each. Moreover, they post their memes daily, and they have got also a big number of likes and comments. Using the saturation technique to determine the significant corpora size, we came at 400 memes



**Figure 0-1 :** Instagram Pages of the Corpora

#### 2.1.4. Data Collection and Analysis procedures

The corpora of 400 memes have been collected through accessing the four pages and screenshooting the memes selected for the study. These were later organized in a separate file. Regarding the analysis of this data, we employed the multimodal discursive semiotics. The choice of this analytical models is fueled by two reasons. First, discourse analysis and semiotics involve the analysis of cultural artifacts to discern how and what meaning is encoded and

communicated through the interplay of signs such as words and images in addition to linguistic materials. It provides a deeper look into the unconscious cultural patterns that shape consumer behavior and response to textual messages. Thematic content and still or video imagery. Second, the discourse of memes is made up of different modes: text, pictures, etc.

## **2.2. Results**

In this section, the results of the discursive and semiotic analysis of the memes are reported. More precisely, the mechanism of humour creation in the memes is explained through a taxonomy of the discourse structure of the memes. Moreover, the way this discourse encompasses and reflects the Algerian Youth culture is displayed.

### **2.2.1. Discursive Taxonomy of the Memes**

In the study corpora, it has been found that humour discourse is created in the memes through five discursive mechanisms. These are classified into five categories of memes:



Figure 0-2 : The cartoon memes

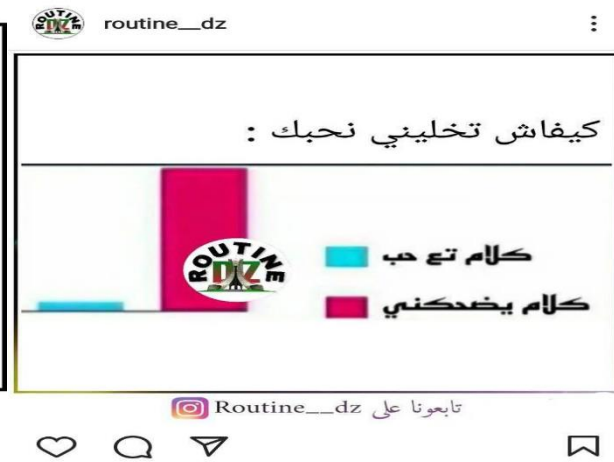


Figure 0-3 : The Textual memes

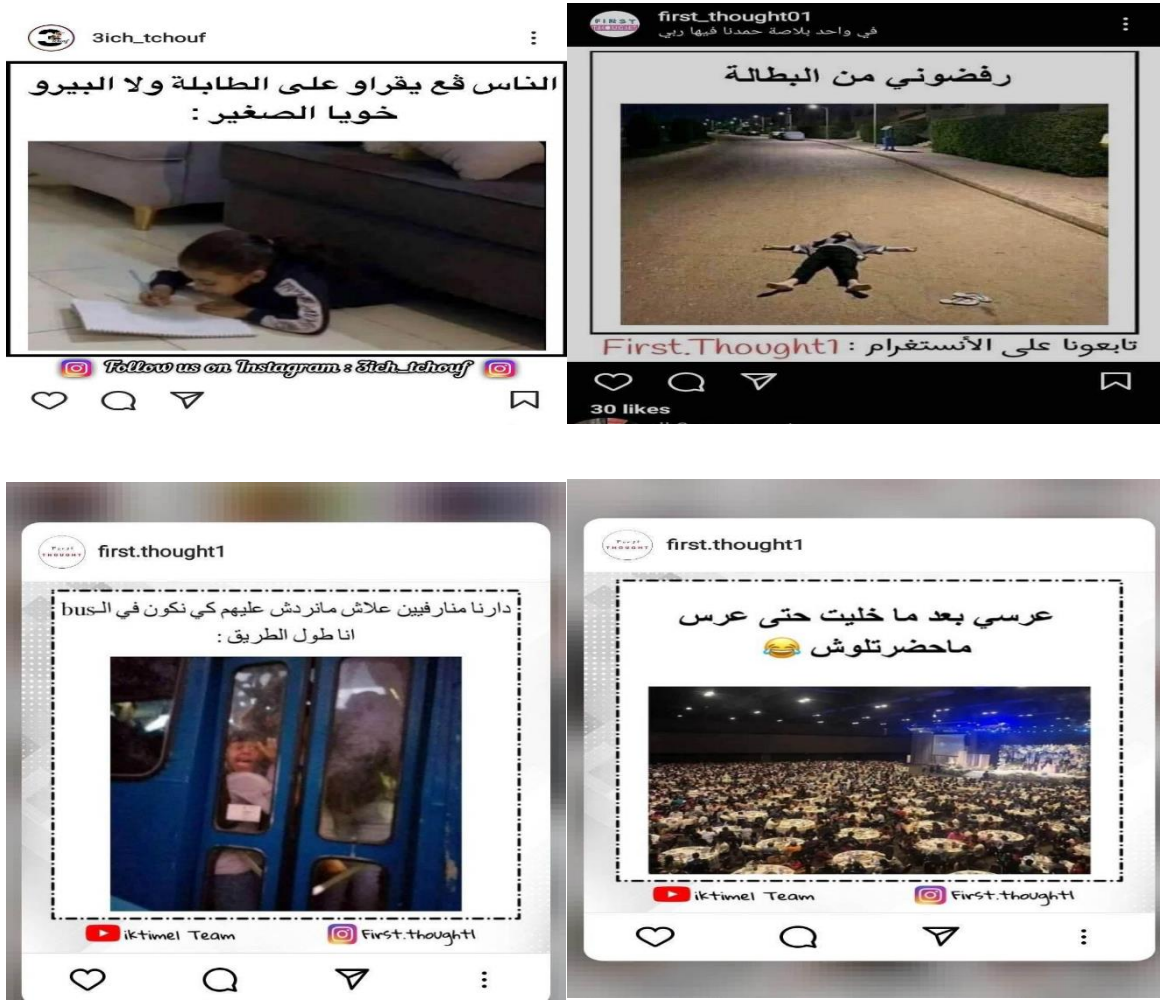


Figure 0-4 : The daily activities memes



Figure 0-5 : The famous figure memes



Figure 0-6 : The animal memes

### 2.2.1.1. Cartoon memes

In this category, humour is created through the use of a funny cartoon or anime (figures 1 to 4) as the core of meaning creation, which is supported by a text that refers to the situation or topic of the meme, and explains them. This is operating in diverse ways as shown below.

One example is illustrated in Figure 2-7 below which represents Tom and Jerry meme. The meme is made of two parts : a picture of the famous characters, Tom and Jerry, from the famous American cartoon Tom and Jerry, and textual sections.



**Figure 0-7 :** Tom and Jerry meme

The picture displays the cat Tom playing kindly with the mouse Jerry. The text in Arabic above says when you put your phone in the charger and begin to discover the real world around you. Then, inside the picture, there is another text which describes the situation of that meme. It says that Tom plays the role of big brother, who is being kind with, little brother, Jerry says: ***Oh, you have grown up, what school year are you at now?*** a meme here belongs to the cartoon category, and Tom & Jerry the famous cartoon is used to describe the obsession over phone use in today's generation, here the creature of the meme is trying to convey a message that the addiction of phone use is a phenomena that somehow separates family members from each other in a funny way. Our generation "the Algerian youth community" has become so obsessed with the idea of the internet and phones to the point that they have their own virtual world on social media away from the real world. The only time they have to spend with the family is when they put their phones on the charger. The memes reflect a struggle for those youth users so they are the only ones who can relate to the meme and understand the real meaning of it.

Another example is shown in Figure 2-8 bellow. This meme is made up of two parts. The first part includes two pictures of a cartoon man in two positions. The first position when he puts his hand on his mouth and the second one when he puts his hand on his cheek, the second

part made of a text in arabic which says whenever you talk with new person and tell him the story of your previous person what bad things that he did to you and he act surprised like he would never do the same actions as him



*Figure 0-8 : a cartoon man meme*

The meme belongs to the cartoon category. The fun part is about the reaction of the cartoon : how he got surprised when his girlfriend told him about her ex and how bad he was treating her, and he got choked, saying he wouldn't do the same as her ex while he's willing to do the exact same thing or maybe worse. The special part about it is the reaction that seems so familiar in Algerian culture. Also, we can see that the word "ex" has become common among youth nowadays. They are using it as a code as well as the words crush, BF, and many other words that are borrowed from other languages, such as English. This makes understanding the meme so difficult and challenging for the older generation.

The third figure in This meme is made up of two parts. The first one includes a text in Arabic that says when you are waiting for the weekend to relax and take some rest but end up waking up at 7:00 a.m. The second is a picture of Squidward's tentacles in the famous cartoon

Spongebob. This picture meme shows Squidward tentacles in his bed, which shows sadness in his face, and he was worried because he got up early...



**Figure 0-9 :** Squidward Tentacles.

The meme is collected from the Nickelodeon animated television series SpongeBob SquarePants. The main character in the meme is Squidward Tentacles, who's presented as a pessimistic character whose only activity is work. And this is the case for Algerian students and workers. They work or study for a whole week, then they are supposed to take a rest on the weekend, but they get upset when they wake up at 7:00 am on their rest day. The similarities between them and Mr. Squidward make the meme extremely funny.

The last example is illustrated in **Figure 2-10** below. This meme is made up of two parts : a picture of a mouse, then a text in Arabic which says when you graduate and you don't find a job in your field. This picture meme of a cartoon mouse standing in his kitchen holding his notebook which contains recipes.



*Figure 0-10* : mouse cartoon.

The picture displays The mouse tells his audience about the recipe for a food. This picture is taken from an old cartoon. The idea of the cartoon is to share cooking hacks and recipes. In Algerian cultures, girls are supposed to stay in the house, find a husband, and please him with delicious recipes. Even graduated girls who couldn't find a job after graduation find that the only solution is marriage or cooking. The humor here is based on the picture of the cartoonist, who represents that the most suitable place for women is the kitchen.

#### 2.2.1.2. Textual memes

In this category, humour is created through the use of words.

The first figure in this meme is made up of three flags of three different countries : Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Algeria. Near each flag there is a text in Arabic that represents the way the people of these countries call their president for Saudi Arabia. It's mister, the president of Morocco, it's your majesty, but we can notice that near the Algerian flag there is a different name, uncle Tboun, and a funny emogi put his hand on his mouth.



*Figure 0-11: different culture in countries.*

The meme pictures demonstrate the cultural disparities in terms of how people address and call their president. For instance, in Saudi Arabia and Morocco, they address their presidents in a formal and serious manner, whereas in Algeria, people call the president "uncle tboun" because Algerians tend to speak less seriously and joke around about serious matters. This has something to do with the youth culture in Algeria...

Another example is shown in Figure 2-12. The meme is made up of two parts : The first part is a text written in Arabic as a title, and the second part is a picture that represents a conversation in Darja between two friends that happened a few minutes before an appointment. In the headline, there is a text in Arabic that says, "**Me a few minutes before having an appointment**".



**Figure 0-12:** Algerian moody girls meme.

The conversation demonstrates how moody Algerian girls can be. We can see that she had intended to go with her friends, but a few minutes before the appointment she changed her mind and decided to cancel it because of her altered mood, and this is the funny thing. The humor present in the last-minute change of plans.

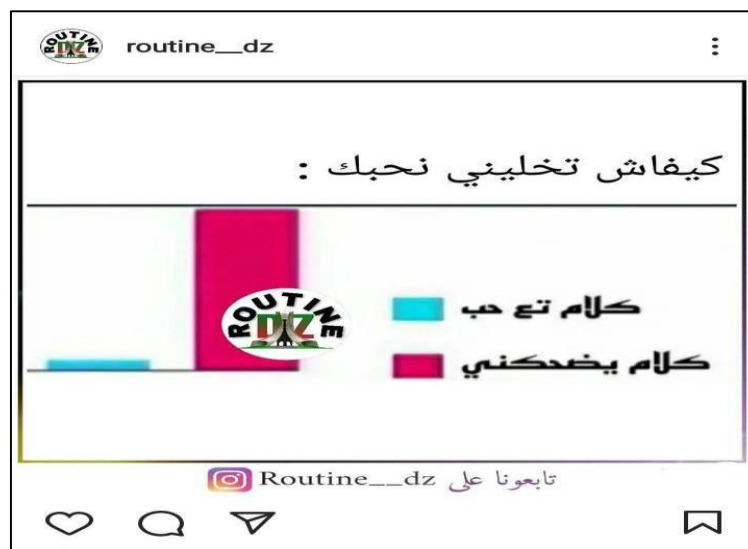
The third figure in This meme is made up of two parts : a conversation between a teacher and his student and a headline in Darja that says, "**Yes, the student is right,**" and **teachers of end times with an angry emoji...**"



**Figure 0-13 :** The effect of supporting team on students meme

The meme describes how Algerian youth are obsessed with football. Here the student got a zero in the module of history, so he asked his teacher about the reason. His answer in the exam to the question "Who colonized Europe ?" was "Real Madrid". Because he is a fan and supporter of this team. The funny thing here is that even the memer supports the student's wrong answer.

The last example is illustrated in the figure below. This meme is made up of two parts : a graphs and a textual section, near to the graphs there is two headlines written in Darja describe them. The first section which is the textual section says: "How do you make me fall in love with you?" and the graphs represent two ways to make that happen.



*Figure 0-14 : love meme*

Normal people fall in love when they hear romantic words, but for young Algerians, they fall in love with people who have a good sense of humor, their ability to make people laugh, and how amusing they can be, not only through words...

### 2.2.1.3. Daily activities memes

In this category, humour is created through the use of a funny captions of daily life (figures 2-10 to 2-14) as the core of meaning creation, which is supported by a text related to the meme, and explains them.

One example is illustrated in the figure below. This meme is made up of two parts. One is a text in Arabic written as a headline, which says : **"They rejected me from unemployment."** The other is a picture...



*Figure 0-15 : disappointment meme*

This type of meme uses random pictures taken from our daily lives. The picture here is of a person lying in the middle of the road. This represents the big disappointment he got when they refused him when he applied to get the employment scholarship. This term, "BATALA", or "unemployment," is a new term used in the Algerian discourse, meaning a scholarship done by the president Teboun for those who can't find a job to help them in their lives. The humor here is that a lot of Algerians are hoping to get this scholarship, and not having it will make them literally die out of sadness...

The second example in this meme is made up of two parts : a text in Darja that says that all people are studying at tables or desks except our little brothers who study on the floor, and a picture of a child studying in his room.



**Figure 0-16:** The educational style of the Algerian kids

This picture is taken from an Algerian house. This is an Algerian kid trying to study in his own way ; generally, Algerian kids don't use tables, desks, or make any efforts when they try to study. The funny part of the meme is that this learning technique is unique only to Algerian culture.

Another example is shown in figure 2-17 . This meme is made up of two parts. The first part is a text in Darja that says, "**My wedding after every wedding I went to.** The second part of the picture represents a wedding in a large hall full of people.



**Figure 0-17:** The Algerian weddings parties

This meme is related to Algerian traditions. Marriage is considered one of the most important events in Algerian culture. In the wedding party, you must invite all your relatives, cousins, and also the people who invite you to their wedding, so when you go to a lot of wedding parties, you will be obliged to invite back all of the people to your own wedding party, and it will be crowded. The funny part about the meme is the exaggeration in the picture. It's obvious that this picture was taken at an international festival.

The last meme is made up of two parts : a text in Darja and a picture that says when my family got angry at me because I did not answer their call. Under it is a picture of a crowded bus. The bus is cramped to the point that people cannot breathe or move their hands.



**Figure 0-18 :** The crowded buses in Algeria

The meme here presents this daily struggle in a funny way. First, we can see the word "DARNA," which means "my parents." When he gets a call from his parents, he can't answer it because he's on the crowded bus and he can't even move his hands to answer the phone, so his parents get worried about him, and in reality, he's looking like the girl in the picture.

#### **2.2.1.4. Famous figure memes**

In this category, humour is created through the use of a funny image of a famous person (figures 2-14 to 2-18) as the core of meaning creation, which is supported by a text that refers to the situation of the meme, and explains them.

The first example in this meme is made up of two parts : an image featuring a famous figure known as Koksal Baba sleeping in his bed and putting his hand on his cheek, and a text in Darja that claims : **"My mother called to tell me that my father was furious and that I should rush and come home"**.



*Figure 0-19 : Koksal Baba*

This picture represents Koksal and his way of sleeping. The image is a meme that depicts the exaggeration of Algerian mothers calling their daughters to come home because they were late and their father is looking for them and he's angry, whereas in reality, their father was asleep and was unaware of what's going on.

Another example is shown in Figure 2-20. This meme is made up of two parts : a picture of an Egyptian actor who's known by having dark circles under his eyes and a text in Darja that says, **"Why do you stay awake till the morning ?"** Me : **No, I don't stay late at night at all.** Also, me : then comes the second section, which represent a picture of an egyptian actor who's known by having dark circles around under his eyes.



**Figure 0-20** : an egyptian actor

The image is a meme that depicts how Algerian youth remain up until the early hours of the morning. The humor here is that when they were asked why they were staying up so late, they responded that they never did it, but the dark circle revealed the reality.

The third meme is made up of two parts : two pictures and a text in Darja that says : **"When you look at yourself in the mirror, you wouldn't recognize yourself."**



**Figure 0-21** : Leonardo Dicaprio and egyptian comedy actor

The image depicts two actors. The first is Leonardo DiCaprio, a handsome American actor, and the second is an Egyptian comedy actor who is somehow fat. The images are a mock image macro that pokes fun at the differences between the two actors. When Algerian youth leave the house in the morning, they wear a good outfit with a good haircut, but when they return home in the evening, all the outfits will be messed up.

The last example is shown in the figure below. This meme is made up of two parts : text and a picture. A picture of the famous football player Messi waving to his wife from the stands

supporting him and waving to him from the audience area in a serious football match, he stops and waves back to her, and a text in Arabic that says : **Messi was doing his warm-ups before the match, though he didn't forget his wife, while your man forgot totally to send you a small message when he hangs out with his friends.**



*Figure 0-22 : Lionel Messi*

The humor here is shown in the situation of Algerian people. When it comes to Algerians, whenever they hang out with their friends, they totally forget about their wives, and they don't even check on her with a tiny message. This generally reflects how Algerian men are emotionless and heartless when it comes to relationships.

#### **2.2.1.5. Animal memes**

In this category, humour is created through the use of captions of animals (figures 23 to 26) as the core of meaning creation, which is supported by a text that refers to the situation or topic of the meme.

One example is illustrated in the figure below. This meme is made of two parts : a headline with a picture of two dogs, and a text in Darja that says when two best friends relate their actions

to each other and understand the story. A picture of two dogs that look like they have solved mysteries.



*Figure 0-23 : The dogs*

This category of memes uses animals to describe a situation, an event, or even a feeling. The meme is based on a dog face that became so popular in 2013. The two dogs reflect the reaction of two best friends when they relate the stories to each other and find out the truth about something. The reaction of the two dogs is so similar to the reaction of a human being when he's thinking about something...

The second meme is made up of two parts : a text in Arabic that says, "**Novembre is the month of falling in love**", and a picture shows a sick cat around medication. The cat is another animal that is used as a meme.



*Figure 0-24 : the cat meme*

The meme is basically talking about a sensitive topic for Algerian youth, which is love. People all around the world describe November as the month of falling in love. In normal conditions, Algerians are supposed to have the same idea about this month, but of course, Algerians are always the exception. So in order to fall in love in this romantic month, they fall sick, and the picture describes their situation.

The third meme is made up of two parts : a picture of an animal (donkey ...) in a late night with the words "**my neighbors**" written just above it, and a text in Darja that says : "**Leaving home at 4:00 am to go on a trip.**" At first, the picture looks boring and ordinary without reading the headline, but after reading it, you will get the joke. The Algerians love to stalk and know everything happening around them, even when it comes to their neighbors.



*Figure 0-25 : a donkey*

The meme is describing the zero privacy between Algerians. The guy had woken up early in order to go on a trip. At that early time, normally he wouldn't find anyone outside, but he saw his neighbor, the stalker, who is pictured as a donkey

The last meme is shown in the figure below. This meme is made up of two parts : a picture of a German shepherd, which is a German breed of working dog of medium to large size, and a test in Darja that says : "**A German shepherd living in Algeria looks like a man who has divorced twice and pays the alimony.**".



*Figure 0-26 : A german shepherd*

The picture displays This type of dog should have a variety of food that includes high-quality animal-based protein sources like lamb, beef, pork, chicken, eggs, and legumes. In addition, the meal should be plentiful in fats, vitamins, and minerals vitamins, and minerals. In fact, sometimes Algerians cannot offer these meals to themselves because of the high prices in the market, so it will be so hard for them to offer this kind of food to their dogs. In this situation, the dog who lives in Algeria will look like the picture : skinny and small.

### **2.3. Discussion**

Memes have become a discursive tool in the digital world and a means of social interaction among young people. We have attempted to analyze different categories of memes; therefore, we have chosen to analyze the memes from four distinct Algerian Instagram pages with the goal of identifying how the components of memes are used to create humor within these five categories that are previously mentioned in the corpus. Accordingly, our initial and fundamental questions are: What are the discursive strategies used in these memes to create humor and how is it tied to Algerian youth culture? This research is carried out to study the most popular categories of memes on Algerian Instagram and the social media discourse used by youth in each. The answers that we tried to validate throughout this paper have acted as real markers in our analysis. The current study's results are significant. Humour is a human behavior and a discursive practice that reflects the culture of the Algerian society through memes.

This research revealed that the most commonly used humor discourse on social media among youth is memes. According to the classification of categories, each category represents a different mechanism in which culture and humor are reflected.

The analysis has shown that memes are successfully interpreted by people who understand the sociocultural context, as we can see in the figure 1 category of memes. Though the cartoon Tom & Jerry is an international cartoon and this meme exists in western societies, it is so hard to understand and create this kind of humor without understanding the socio-cultural context that is related to it.

Algeria is a multilingual country, which makes the memes so unique. We have noticed through the previous analysis that some English and French words are written in Arabic besides using the dialect language, which is Darja, which makes the process of understanding memes so hard and at the same time unique only to the Algerians.

Humor 2.0 mirrors the socio-cultural patterns of the community ; therefore, memes can be used as a tool for understanding society. The memes don't only use the language of that specific society ; they also reflect the political, social, and cultural aspects of that society, and that's the case with the Algerian memes.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the method employed in the study and the results obtained. It then explained the findings and their significance. It has shown that humour is created in memes through five discourse mechanisms, which operate diversely. Moreover, it has highlighted the way humour in memes is more than a fun practice; it is a mirror of the socio-cultural patterns of the community, and is therefore of significant importance for media studies, and human and social sciences in general.

## **2.5. Limitations and further research**

Due to time and effort constraints, this study examined only four Instagram pages; thus, our results cannot be generalized beyond the selected sample.

There are only a few studies that tackle our topic in Algeria. that make the topic original and new.

"Explaining a joke is like dissecting a frog. You understand it better, but the frog dies in the process". E.B. White's analysis of humor gives you a better understanding of its mechanism, though it is somehow boring and hard.

The analysis of memes and their relation to cultural aspects is still an interesting topic that requires further research, and based on the present findings, we suggest future studies that analyze memes on different social media platforms, not only Instagram.

## **General conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Internet memes are generally utilized as a form of communication rather than only for amusement. The research also found that consumer relationships and public involvement have changed as a result of photo-based online memes. The memes under investigation use language and images that reflect the youth culture of Algeria. These memes are typically perceived by young people, who draw particular conclusions from each meme. Internet memes are also evaluated in light of the context in which they are encountered by young people in Algeria. Therefore, an Internet meme is a type of popular creativity that uses visuals to express cultural activities. Meme users express their emotions, viewpoints, and ideas about society, the world, and themselves by generating and remixing images and words. As a result, cultural units are passed on from person to person. The Internet, along with user-generated content, facilitates the Internet meme's cross-cultural and cross-genre movement. As Instagram becomes more well-known and is used more frequently, memes created by individuals or organizations and shared through their Instagram profiles among other users are more widely shared. In the case of Algeria, Instagram creates a public space where aware citizens have critical conversations about current issues. Additionally, the culture of mass entertainment consumption in the age of the internet is facilitating the growth of the virtual public sphere, where individuals primarily go in search of enjoyment but wind up sharing and discussing social and political topics. In that situation, memes play a significant role in the cultural discourse of young people, reflecting their reality. Hence, memes as artifacts of participatory digital culture illustrate the duality of structure and look at memes as a type of rhetoric, expanding our understanding of how memes work in participatory media culture. Therefore, it can be said that the world of Internet memes is vast ; the amount of cultural objects created on a daily basis is astounding, turning readers into authors and critics and back to readers at a rap



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