

Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups.

الفكاهة المُضرة: من السخرية إلى التنمر الإلكتروني – تحليل محتوى منشورات الميمات في مجموعات الفيسبوك الجزائرية

Walid Chaibedraa*	University of Jijel (Algeria)	E-mail: walid.chaibeddra@univ-jijel.dz
Djihad sahraoui	University of Medea (Algeria)	sahraoui.djihad@univ-medea.dz

Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the nature of the prevailing discourse in memes within the Algerian digital space and its role in promoting certain forms of digital bullying. We relied on the survey method and content analysis tool, focusing on a sample of meme posts in one of the "Facebook" groups. The analysis categories included the subject, rhetorical nature, intonation, nature of phrases, targeted characters, media used, and language. The results showed that sarcastic discourse is the most common, and that the combination of text and image is the predominant form in meme production, with a clear dominance of Algerian dialect, which effectively conveys sarcastic meanings. It also became clear that public figures and social groups are the main targets of this type of discourse.

Keywords: Bullying, mockery, memes, Facebook.

*Corresponding author: Walid Chaibedraa

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

An introduction:

In recent decades, cyberspace has witnessed a rapid expansion in digital expression patterns and a significant circulation of new forms of communicative content, including humorous content, which has become prominent within the system of social interactions in digital environments. This context has given rise to various forms of expression, the most notable of which are memes that condense reality into short, sarcastic images and clips, spreading quickly among users. This has granted them a popular character and high symbolic efficacy in representing and expressing social and political issues in unconventional ways.

However, this form of digital expression is not without issues related to the nature of the boundaries between satire as a mechanism for social critique and its transformation into a tool for symbolic violence through what is known as cyberbullying. Some memes shift from being a means of mockery to a practice of psychological or social harm hidden behind a facade of humor. This issue becomes more complex in local contexts where certain groups or individuals are more susceptible to stigmatization or symbolic distortion due to social, cultural, or even geographical factors, as is the case in the Algerian context.

Facebook groups form active cyber spaces where individuals exchange a vast array of memes that reflect their perceptions of daily issues and current events. These memes are characterized by their satirical content, addressing sensitive topics such as poverty, unemployment, politics, and identity. However, many of these posts go beyond satire, taking on aggressive or mocking dimensions that may fall under the category of cyberbullying, especially when they target specific individuals or vulnerable social groups, or appear to generalize negatively and intentionally insult.

In light of this reality, the study poses a central question regarding how the Facebook memes circulated in Algerian groups express this shift from satire to bullying, and whether it is possible to classify this content into specific semantic categories that help understand its characteristics, mechanisms of operation, and social dimensions within the Algerian cyber environment.

How do meme posts express the transition from mockery to bullying in the Algerian groups under study on Facebook?

This query leads to a **series of inquiries:**

- What formal and linguistic qualities do the memes posts in the study sample display?
- What are the predominant themes and cultural symbols that repeatedly appear in the analyzed posts?

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

- What semantic indicators in the content demonstrate the transition in speech from sarcasm to bullying in the analyzed posts?

-Research objectives:

Disclosing the morphological and linguistic features that characterize memes posts, identifying the most salient themes that reappear in the analyzed posts. The research also aims to identify the semantic markers in the material that indicate the shift in discourse from sarcasm to bullying.

Definition of Cyberbullying and Its Effects:

Cyberbullying is defined as "an aggressive act or behavior carried out using electronic tools by a group or individual repeatedly and over a period of time against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves." This behavior can negatively affect a person's mental health, leading to social anxiety, depression, stress, and social isolation. Adolescents and minorities are considered as well as the most vulnerable to cyberbullying. In extreme cases, victims may resort to self-destructive actions, such as suicide, due to the unbearable trauma of cyberbullying (Pamecha, (2024), p02). Cyberbullying is defined as the harassment of peers using modern technology such as mobile phones and email.

It is also recognized that cyberbullying is not a separate phenomenon but rather another form of bullying. It is an indirect form of aggression where harassment does not occur face-to-face but via an electronic interface (Beran, Tanya (2007), p17), and Burmaster defines it as an aggressive behavior that usually involves power imbalances between the bully and the victim, and it is repeated over time.

Traditional bullying includes three main characteristics: an aggressive act by one person toward another "the victim" with the intent to harm, this act is repeated over time and contexts, and there is a power imbalance between the bully and the victim, with the victim being unable to defend themselves easily. This power imbalance may be related to physical strength, age, financial status, or social level (Hashem, (2019), p203).

■ The challenge of differentiating between sarcasm and bullying:

Differentiating between sarcasm and cyberbullying constitutes one of the most intricate challenges in the analysis of digital communication. Online discussions frequently exhibit conciseness and lack non-verbal signs like intonation and body language, rendering the interpretation of intentions ambiguous. In this

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

context, remarks may be amusing or sardonic, yet they possess negative connotations intended to undermine or devalue the other party. An illustration of this is a remark that seems to be humorous: "Wow, I am genuinely astonished by your capacity to fail at every endeavor; it is indeed a remarkable skill." This statement seems humorous, yet fundamentally, it serves as a caustic remark that delivers an insulting message to the recipient. The problem is that such statements may not be readily categorized using conventional detection methods that depend on sentiment analysis based on keywords, as they can produce erroneous findings if context is disregarded. Sentiment analysis algorithms are constrained when addressing this type of information, as they concentrate on explicit language elements and fail to recognize rhetorical structures or subtle indications of sarcasm (Pamecha, (2024), pp 03-04). Consequently, there is a trend towards the development of more intricate analytical methodologies grounded in contextual models that can comprehend underlying meanings and amalgamate textual analysis with visual and symbolic indicators, particularly when examining distinctive characteristics or remarks accompanied by images.

Within the Arab-Islamic context, especially in the Algerian era, this matter acquires further complexities. Local culture bestows significant importance on humor and sarcasm in everyday life, whether through verbal jokes or social media exchanges. Nonetheless, these behaviors may devolve into instruments of insult or defamation, particularly in dialogues concerning religion or politics, when humor can intertwine with caustic sarcasm that infringes upon ideals or personal reputation. This requires an analytical approach that accounts for cultural and linguistic specificity to delineate the distinction between appropriate comedy and detrimental bullying.

▪ **Mechanisms for dealing with cyberbullying:**

Cyberbullying has become more widespread, especially toward certain social groups and ethnic and religious minorities, and human online moderators are no longer effective in detecting it. Therefore, deep learning mechanisms have been used, but they still have issues with misclassifications. The performance of deep learning techniques in detecting cyberbullying on social networks can be improved by addressing the challenges posed by sarcastic or semantically ambiguous texts. These patterns of content may seem harmless, but they carry a negative intent or appear hostile while being friendly in nature, leading to classification errors. To increase accuracy, advanced sarcasm detection techniques can be combined with

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

other natural language processing tasks such as sentiment analysis and intent classification to better understand the context and purpose of messages.

In addition, model efficiency can be improved by addressing constraints such as the variation in defining bullying compared to hate speech and relying on outdated or manually annotated data. Creating modern and diverse datasets is a crucial step to increase generalizability and make models more capable of detecting forms of bullying even when they are disguised behind jokes or hints.

The common reason for misclassifications in cyberbullying detection models is the ambiguity in the concept of "sarcasm," especially texts that appear innocent but have negative intent or seem hostile but have positive intent. These often contain sarcasm or irony, leading to misclassification (Guo, (2024), p 52) "Xiaoyu Guo" and "Susan Josh" propose a method to mitigate these misclassifications by integrating neural network-based sarcasm detection. The incorporation of sarcasm scores significantly enhances the classification performance. Future work can also explore how other natural language processing tasks, such as sentiment analysis, emotion analysis, or intent classification, can affect the detection of cyberbullying (Guo, (2024)).

▪ **Categories of cyberbullying:**

Research delineates seven prevalent forms of cyberbullying, including flame, online harassment, cyberstalking, denigration, masquerade, outing, and exclusion (Beran, Tanya (2007), p 18).

These shapes may be delineated as follows:

- **Reprimand:** A public exchange of antagonistic and severe communications
- **. Harassment:** Persistent and ongoing abusive communications.
- **Cyberstalking:** Surveillance, tracking, and intimidation in the digital realm.
- **Defamation:** Disseminating falsehoods or rumors to harm one's reputation.
- **Impersonation:** Assuming the identity of the victim or establishing a fraudulent account.
- **Exposing/blackmailing:** Disclosing confidential information or threatening its publication
- **Exclusion:** Intentional omission from groups or digital engagements.

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

Furthermore, further forms of bullying can be delineated as follows:

- ✓ **Verbal bullying:** is a form of defamation or allegations that can inflict various forms of sorrow, misery, or psychological anguish on the victim. This may encompass the following: Issuing derogatory remarks that undermine an individual's dignity, labelling them with unsuitable epithets, and making disparaging and injurious comments regarding their appearance, among other actions.
- ✓ **Physical bullying:** It constitutes an unwelcome physical interaction characterized by touch between the aggressor and the victim. Recognized manifestations include striking, thrusting, jostling, kicking, and unwarranted contact.
- ✓ **Emotional bullying:** includes activities that adversely affect the victim's psychological and behavioral well-being, such as stability, adjustment, and happiness, one of which is the dissemination of false rumors.
- ✓ **Sexual bullying:** Any bullying conduct, whether physical or symbolic, that targets an individual's sexual life, employing this facet as a means of victimization (male or female), either directly or indirectly, such as through electronic communications.
- ✓ **Cyberbullying:** transpires through the use of contemporary electronic methods, often evading detection by parents or educational authorities, as the perpetrator may employ a pseudonym. This sort of bullying, termed neutral bullying, manifests through short messages (SMS), emails, images, or text messages, all of which possess malevolent and offensive attributes directed at the recipient (Malika, (2020), p. 69).

■ **Method and tools of study:**

The study used a survey methodology, categorized as descriptive research.

This method was selected for multiple reasons, especially due to the study's nature and its requirements that correspond with this approach, given that the survey method examines contemporary facts pertaining to a phenomenon, situation, group of individuals, or a collection of events or phenomena (Hussein, (1995), p132). This is one of the most significant methodologies employed in media studies, particularly in descriptive research.

Given that our study necessitates a descriptive analysis of the media content under examination, through a meticulous analysis that enables us to obtain precise

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

and accurate results, we have opted to utilize content analysis as a methodological instrument for both quantitative and qualitative investigations of the communication medium's content. It serves as an instrument for analyzing and delineating communication content (Hamid, (2009), p22). The study sample was derived using purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that selects elements from the target community based on their relevance and alignment with the study's objectives, as well as the established inclusion and exclusion criteria (Daniel, (2015), p143).

We selected a purposive sample since our objective is not to generalize the results, but rather to choose research units irrespective of their representativeness of the broader population. The critical factor is the degree to which it yields cognitive outcomes rather than its representativeness (Daliou, (2014), p195) The study sample comprised 24 postings from the "**Algérie Jokes**" page between mid-May and mid-August.

We identified several critical categories, which include: the subject category, the rhetorical nature of memes category, the intonation category, the sentence structure category, the targeted bullying category, the media category, and the language category.

-The applied framework:

1-Topic category:

The topic	Repetitions	Percentages
Political topic	04	16.67
Social	13	54.17
Economic	06	25
Religious	01	04.16
The total	24	100%

According to the statistical results presented in the table above, the social topic ranked highest at 54.17%, accounting for over half of the observed material in the sample, followed by the economic topic at 25% and the political topic at 16.67%. Simultaneously, the religious subject occupied the lowest position with 4.16%. This ranking signifies that social issues are the most commonly addressed, succeeded by

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

economic and political issues, although interest in religious themes is evidently waning. The prevalence of social themes in the "Algérie Jokes" group can be attributed to the group's character, which focuses on quotidian happenings, social interactions, and common experiences that members can readily engage with and replicate in a sardonic fashion. This content facilitates wider communication by engaging the audience's personal experiences and eliciting laughter, in contrast to political, economic, or religious subjects that may necessitate extensive expertise or trigger sensitivities.

Furthermore, it is evident that the economic theme, which secured the second position, predominantly focused on satirical content regarding the decline of living standards, escalating prices, and challenges of daily existence. This illustrates the audience's apprehension regarding economic conditions and their immediate effects on their lives; they use humor as a mechanism to mitigate distress or convey discontent indirectly. This content garners significant attention by merging social critique with fun. The political subjects, which placed third, frequently included ridicule of certain leaders or their contentious remarks, suggesting that the audience employs humor as a mechanism for political critique and to circumvent limitations on direct communication.

The religious subject was depicted through a satirical post concerning a religious program on a private channel, which provocatively questioned the permissibility of siblings sleeping together in front of the air conditioner during the summer. This garnered attention because of the peculiarity of the subject and its divergence from significant theological matters.

2-The rhetorical nature of the meme:

The rhetorical nature of the meme	Repetitions	Percentages
Ironical discourse	09	34.61
Belligerent discourse	07	26.92
Exclusionary discourse	06	23.08
Ironical discourse	04	15.39
The total	26	100%

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

The results indicate that sarcastic speech ranked highest among meme discourse styles at 34.61%, followed by aggressive discourse at 26.92%, exclusionary discourse at 23.08%, and ironic discourse at 15.39%. This distribution indicates users' inclination towards sarcasm as a predominant means of commenting on diverse subjects, accompanied by a notable presence of discourse featuring direct attacks or exclusion, albeit to a lesser degree, while ironic discourse ranked last. The examination of the discourse characteristics of memes in the sample reveals that sarcastic speech is the most prevalent. This discourse manifested as parody of public personalities or regions in Algeria, although it refrained from slander or exclusion, hence enhancing its acceptance and prevalence among digital users. It offers humorous content that elicits laughter and circumvents substantial sensitivities, potentially accounting for its pre-eminence over alternative modes of conversation.

The offensive discourse rated second, characterized by direct statements aimed at specific individuals, with strong criticism or outright insults. This significant presence illustrates the character of intense debates on digital platforms, where memes may evolve into instruments for articulating hatred or animosity towards contentious individuals or viewpoints.

The exclusionary discourse emerged in third place, characterized by terms that target specific sections of the country or particular social groups, notably women. This trend illustrates the sporadic employment of memes to perpetuate stereotypes or convey discriminatory sentiments, even when presented in a humorous or sarcastic manner. Ultimately, the sardonic speech ranked last, marked by the employment of astute sarcasm or implicit criticism that necessitates the reader to infer the underlying meaning. While it is less common than other patterns, its symbolic essence may provide a more profound influence on an audience capable of understanding it.

3-Characteristics of the intonation:

Characteristics of the intonation	Repetitions	Percentages
Joking	07	29.17
Sarcastic	12	50
Revenge	05	20.83
The total	24	100%

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

The analysis of the intonation of the memes from the "Algérie Jokes" group revealed that the sarcastic intonation predominated, comprising 50% of the entire sample, followed by the joking intonation at 29.17%, and the spiteful intonation at 20.83%. This rating indicates a significant inclination among group content writers to utilize sarcasm as their predominant means of conveying attitudes and ideas, with a comparatively diminished occurrence of light hearted humor or boastfulness over specific events and individuals. The first appearance of a sarcastic intonation, succeeded by a fun intonation and subsequently a mocking intonation, indicates a distinct inclination among meme makers in the community to Favor indirect speech as a means of articulating daily criticism and sarcasm rather than engaging in open confrontation.

The caustic intonation present in the lead serves as an instrument for indirect criticism, which contributes to its popularity. Nonetheless, this appeal may facilitate its evolution into covert bullying. When sarcasm is reiterated concerning the same persons or social groupings, it transitions from a hilarious remark to a social labelling mechanism that results in the exclusion or distortion of the target's identity. This transition typically unfolds gradually, first as ephemeral jokes and subsequently evolving through repetition, generalization, and the incorporation of accumulated negative connotations, leading the audience to embrace an offensive stereotype.

The essence of collective sharing in memes enhances the potency of satirical content, since it is repeated and disseminated outside its original context, intensifying the Bullying impact on the subject. Regarding the teasing intonation, although it is innocuous, it is not exempt from this oversight; Recurrent jokes on physical characteristics, accents, or humiliating circumstances can serve as a mechanism for perpetuating bullying in a supposedly "gentle" fashion, while it inflicts the same detrimental psychological effects on the victims. Conversely, the intonation of schadenfreude resembles overt bullying, as it derives pleasure from the misfortunes of others and is frequently linked to sentiments of communal triumphalism. This form of discourse undermines the target by transforming the circumstance into fodder for communal ridicule. The audience's heightened engagement transforms schadenfreude into a tool of social pressure, serving to entertain while simultaneously exacerbating the victim's shame.

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

4-The characteristics of the utilized sentences:

Utilized sentences	Repetitions	Percentages
Existence of linguistic manipulation	07	24.14
The existence of pejorative expressions	11	37.93
Explicit derision	06	20.69
Existence of derogatoryremarks	05	17.24
The total	29	100%

The results revealed that the existence of pejorative expressions ranked first, accounting for 37.93% of the total sample, followed by linguistic manipulation at 24.14%, direct mockery at 20.69%, and finally the use of insults at 17.24%.

The predominance of derogatory expressions indicates a clear tendency to employ linguistic discourse in a manner that undermines the value of the target, making it the most prevalent form of bullying in memes. Such expressions construct negative mental images that become reinforced over time. Next comes linguistic manipulation, which—despite its seemingly creative nature—often turns into a means of implicit or suggestive denigration, thus representing an indirect form of bullying that tends to be more socially acceptable under the guise of humor. As for direct mockery, it occupies an intermediate position between innocent teasing and explicit bullying, as it places the target in a publicly embarrassing situation, thereby reinforcing shame and stigmatization.

Although insults are the least frequent, they represent the most explicit and straightforward manifestation of bullying, as they reduce the target to a single degrading attribute, intensifying the psychological impact on the victim. In all cases, the repetition and circulation of these patterns contribute to the reproduction of bullying behaviors and the granting of social legitimacy to them—particularly when framed as entertainment.

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

5-Target groups ofbullying:

TargetedCategories	Repetitions	Percentages
Public figures	09	37.5
Social groups	07	29.17
Geographicalregions	05	20.83
Professions or sectors	03	12.5
The total	24	100%

The results regarding the targeted groups of bullying showed that public figures ranked first with 37.5% of the total sample, followed by some social groups with 29.17%, then geographical areas with 20.83%, and finally some professions and sectors with 12.5%.

The prominence of public figures reflects a clear tendency to target individuals with media, political, or artistic presence, as they are viewed as symbols representing positions, policies, or events, making bullying against them socially acceptable or even justified in the eyes of some. This is followed by targeting specific social groups, which is an indicator of the presence of patterns of stereotyping and collective stigmatization, where negative characteristics are associated with an entire human group instead of specific individuals, deepening social division and reproducing stereotypes.

As for targeting geographical areas, it carries regional dimensions that may turn into mockery of dialects, customs, or cultural appearances, which reinforces the discourse of division among the citizens of the same nation. Meanwhile, although professions or sectors are the least targeted, mocking them contributes to devaluing the work or the workers in them, especially when specific negatives are highlighted and generalized. In all cases, it becomes clear that digital bullying is not limited to

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

individuals but extends to include collective entities, increasing its harmful impact on society.

7-Category of Media Used in Memes:

Media Types	Repetitions	Percentages
Image only	08	33.33
Image withtext	13	54.17
Short video	03	12.5
The total	24	100%

The media analysis of the memes in the "Algérie Jokes" group revealed that image-text memes constituted 54.17% of the total sample, followed by image-only memes at 33.33%, and short video memes at 12.5%.

This rating signifies that the integration of image and text constitutes the predominant method among content creators in the group, owing to its superior capacity for transmitting meaning and amplifying the message. This dependence on the amalgamation of image and text endows memes with an enhanced ability to elicit engagement, as it merges the image's capacity to capture attention and facilitate rapid comprehension with the text's potential to elucidate or introduce an additional layer of sarcasm or implicit significance. This strategy facilitates an enhancement of the intensity of sardonic or critical conversation through direct interaction between visual and vocal aspects. Memes that rely exclusively on photos, while ranking second, gain their potency from visual cues that may facilitate diverse interpretations. Nevertheless, they may be less efficacious in communicating the message relative to the text-image amalgamation.

Short videos, however infrequent, possess the capacity for significant short-term influence owing to their dynamic characteristics. Nonetheless, they necessitate greater production effort, which may account for their diminished prevalence relative to other formats.

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

LanguageUsed:

LanguageUsed	Repetitions	Percentages
Standard Arabic	02	08.33
Dialectal Arabic	21	87.50
French	01	04.17
The total	24	100%

The results of the language analysis of the memes published within the Algeria Jokes group showed that memes written in the local dialect ranked first with 87.50% of the total sample, followed by memes in Modern Standard Arabic with 08.33%, while memes in French came last with 04.17%.

This ranking indicates that the dialect (Darija) is the primary tool for communication within this group, due to its ability to convey a sarcastic or mocking intonation clearly and quickly, as well as its connection to the local cultural identity, which makes the content more relatable to the target audience. Relying on Darija also allows for a wide range of verbal manipulation and the inclusion of colloquial expressions that may carry strong implications or sharp criticisms.

As for Modern Standard Arabic, its lesser presence reflects its use in specific contexts, which may be related to an attempt to impart a formal or serious intonation to the discourse. This could be leveraged to highlight irony or amplify sarcasm through the contrast between writing style and content. In contrast, the use of French appears to be extremely limited and may be selectively invoked to create a linguistic or cultural distance, or to emphasize elitism in the discourse, which could intensify the messages directed at certain groups.

■ **Study Results :**

- Social topics came to the forefront, indicating that social issues, daily life events, social relationships, and shared situations represent fertile ground for mockery and bullying.
- Regarding the categories of the discursive nature of memes, we observe that sarcastic discourse is the most prevalent, reflecting the reliance on sarcasm as

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

a primary tool for expression and commentary in memes, with a notable presence of discourse that includes direct attacks or exclusion, albeit to a lesser extent. And this is the same result we reached regarding the intonation used, where the sarcastic intonation came first, which can be explained by the fact that "sarcasm" is an attractive tool for indirect criticism. However, this very attractiveness may open the door for it to transform into convincing bullying.

- When sarcasm is repeated about the same individuals or social groups, it shifts from a humorous comment to a social labeling process that leads to the exclusion or distortion of the target's image. This transformation often occurs gradually and in stages, starting as fleeting jokes and then developing through repetition, generalization, and the addition of accumulated negative implications, making the audience adopt an offensive stereotype.
- Regarding the category of the nature of sentences used in memes, the study found that the existence of pejorative expressions topped the results, indicating a clear tendency to direct discourse in a way that diminishes the value of the target, making it the most prevalent form of bullying in memes. This is especially true as they create negative mental images that become entrenched over time. Following this is linguistic manipulation, which, despite its creative appearance, often turns into a means of insinuation or negative implication, making it an indirect form of bullying that is more socially acceptable under the guise of humor.
- Regarding the category of targeted personalities, public figures topped the list of those targeted by meme creators, followed by certain social groups and geographical areas. The prominence of public figures reflects a clear tendency to target individuals with media, political, or artistic presence, as they are viewed as symbols representing positions, policies, or events. This makes bullying them socially acceptable or even justified in the eyes of some. Following this, specific social groups are targeted, indicating patterns of stereotyping and collective stigmatization, where negative traits are attributed to an entire group rather than specific individuals, deepening social division and perpetuating circulating stereotypes.
- As for the category of media used in memes, memes that combine image and text are the most prevalent. This indicates that the combination of image and text is the most common approach among content creators in the group, due to the greater possibilities it offers in conveying meaning and intensifying the

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

message. This reliance on blending image and text gives memes a doubled ability to provoke interaction, as it combines the power of the image in attracting attention and quick perception with the text's ability to clarify or add an additional layer of sarcasm or implicit meaning.

- Regarding the language category, Algerian dialect was dominant in the meme posts under study, which can be explained That the Algerian dialect constitutes the primary tool for communication within Algerian society, due to its ability to convey a sarcastic or mocking intonation clearly and quickly, in addition to its connection to the local cultural identity, which makes the content more relatable to the target audience. Furthermore, relying on the dialect also provides ample space for verbal manipulation and the inclusion of colloquial expressions that may carry strong implications or sharp criticisms.

■ **Conclusion:**

The study revealed that the meme space within the digital environment under investigation constitutes a vibrant arena of expression, blending humor with social critique. However, this fusion is not without practices that can slip into various forms of cyberbullying. Satire serves as an engaging communicative instrument and a method for indirectly expressing repressed emotions, repetition and systematic targeting can transform it into a mechanism for producing social stigma or reinforcing negative stereotypes. This transformation highlights the dual role of memes: on the one hand, they are a platform for creativity and innovation in expression, and on the other hand, they can become a tool for excluding or defaming individuals or groups, especially in contexts where awareness of the dangers of exclusionary discourse is lacking.

The study also demonstrates that this interactive space is not separate from its cultural and social environment; rather, it reflects and reproduces it through its choices in language, symbols, and discourse patterns. The media and language used give memes a high capacity to reach audiences and stimulate interaction, but at the same time, they contribute to intensifying messages and deepening their impact, whether positive or negative. This makes the study of memes essential for understanding the new communication dynamics in the digital space, as they are not merely forming of entertainment, but rather effective tools for shaping attitudes and reproducing meanings within societies.

The Title of the Article: Harmful Humor: From Satire to Cyberbullying – A Content Analysis of Meme Posts in Algerian Facebook Groups	Author 1: Walid Chaibedraa Author 2: Djihadsahraoui	Volume: 13 / Issue : 02 (27) / 2025	Pages : 475 - 486
---	--	---	--------------------------

References list:

- 1- Beran,Tanya . (2007). The Relationship between Cyberbullying and School Bullying ." **Journal of Student Wellbeing**, Volume 01, Issue (02) . University of South Australia.
- 2- Delliou, Foudil.(2014) Introduction to research methodology in human and social sciences, Algeria: Dar Houma for printing, Publishing and distribution.
- 3- Sharara, Hayat & Hasi, Malikah. (2020) “Electronic bullying: A theoretical study in dimensions and practices.” **Journal of Media and Society**, Volume 04, Issue (01), Algeria :.Publisher: University of Hamma Lakhdar – El Oued, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences.
- 4- Johnny, Daniel .(2015) .Fundamentals of sample selection in scientific research .)Translated by Tarek Atiya Abdul Rahman (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Institute of Public Administration.
- 5- Mohamed Abdel Hamid .(2009) .Content analysis in media research . Beirut: Dar wa Maktabat Al-Hilal.
- 6- Pamecha, Pinky .(2024) .Cyberbullying or just Sarcasm? Unmasking Coordinated Networks on Reddit .International Journal of Engineering Research in Computer Science and Engineering.
- 7- Samir Mohamed Hussein .(1995) .**Media research** .Cairo: Alam Al-Kutub.
- 8- Thana Hashim Muhammad .(2019) .The reality of the phenomenon of electronic bullying among secondary school students in Fayoum Governorate and ways to confront it (A field study) .,Fayoum University **Journal of Educational and Psychologica Studies**.(12)
- 9- Xiaoyu Guo .(2024) .Using Sarcasm to Improve Cyberbullying Detection . Aggression&Cyberbullying) ‘p .(59-52) Torino, Italia.