A Genre Analysis of Algerian and Jordanian Obituary Announcements

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Abstract: The study investigates the generic structure of 240 Algerian and Jordanian obituary announcements published on Facebook with the purpose of identifying, describing and analyzing their structure, generic component, and communicative functions. The study adopts a mixed method approach, including both quantitative and qualitative methods -with more emphasis on the latter- couched within the Bhatia (1993) genre analysis framework. The qualitative analysis helps in understanding the underlying process and details of obituary writings. The quantitative analysis provides the frequencies and identifies the structural order of the rhetorical moves. The study reveals the similarities and differences between Facebook obituaries in both societies. The results show that: (i) Algerian and Jordanian obituaries consist of eleven generic moves (1-11); (ii) While Algerian and Jordanian obituaries share some similarities in Moves (1-6), they differ in Moves (7-9) with some additional differences noted in Moves (10) and (11); (iii) Religion and socio-economic statuses are two key factors in composing the Algerian and Jordanian obituaries. This study provides an original contribution and fills a gap in the literature of Facebook obituaries in both Algerian and Jordanian contexts, addressing an unexplored area. Future cross-cultural research is required to spot any cross-cultural similarities or contrasts among these announcements within different religious and ethnic groups, whether in Algeria (Amazigh), Jordan (Kurds or Armenians) and / or in other Arabic contexts.

Keywords: death, generic move, genre analysis, obituary announcements, religion, socio-economic status

1. Introduction

According to Merriam Webster dictionary, the term "obituary" appeared in English in the 18th century. It comes from the Latin word "obituarium", a noun derived from the Medieval Latin "obituarius" to provide records or dates of death. The term, "obituarius" comprises two parts: "obitu" which means "death" and the noun suffix "arius". Moreover, the first obituary probably appeared after the invention of the printing press (Vocabulary n.d.) in the 19th century, obituary announcements became more elaborate, but photos were not added until the 20th century.

Death is an inevitable end to everyone's life. People of different ages die every day, and their death is announced publicly in different ways so that others can offer condolences and support their families in their crises. Usually, these announcements use a language that does not only create grief in readers but also evokes their appreciation and admiration for the deceased (Afful 2012). In fact, death is concerned with different communicative events like tributes, dirges, epitaphs, and obituaries/ death notices (Moses and Marelli 2004).

Obituary is a new genre that developed from the speech act of condolences. Moreover, obituary is a record of announcement about death, especially in newspapers (Al Zubaidi 2014). It usually contains short biographical information about the dead person (ibid). Its primary aim is to tell the readers about the death of someone they may or may not know (Sawalmeh 2019). More specifically, the new practice of writing obituaries spread very quickly via print media (newspapers), broadcast media (TV) and social media (Facebook).

Researchers (Al-Ali 2005; Al-khatib and Salem 2011; Aremu 2011; Salahshour 2017; Chaudhry 2018 and Sawalmeh 2019 among others) have been interested in exploring obituarial discourse in newspapers. However, due to various circumstances, especially the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19), which caused drastic changes in many aspects of our lives, things that had previously been allowed were no longer admissible. Governments were forced to take several measures to control and prevent the spread and transmission of the virus. On 16th March 2020, the Jordanian government declared a state of emergency that prevented funeral gatherings and wedding events (Banikalef 2020). The same happened on the 28th June 2020 when the Algerian government prevented any gatherings and mourning councils (Kalache, Beladjeraf and Mestaoui 2020). This new situation triggered interest to explore a new genre that is better adapted to the new conditions. Instead of funeral gatherings, the family of the deceased or his/ her friends now write an online obituary notice on their Facebook pages to announce the death and receive condolences via Facebook messages or by phone.

Although there is a vast body of literature devoted to analyzing obituaries in newspapers and magazines, few researchers have studied this issue in Jordan (Al-Shboul and Maros 2013; Hamdan and Al-Sayyed 2022). However, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no research has contrasted Facebook obituaries in Algerian and Jordanian contexts. This shortage has led the researchers to investigate online Algerian and Jordanian obituaries on Facebook.

1.1 **Computer-mediated communication**

The internet has changed how people mutually interact, as they now interact and communicate through device-based mediation or what is known as Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) (Bekar and Christiansen 2018). CMC was first used for governmental and military purposes. After 1980, it was admitted into academia and business sectors. Nowadays, the rapid spread of technology has greatly increased the scope of CMC (Younes and Altakhaineh 2022; ElShami et al. 2023).

As such, different researchers in applied linguistics, communication and sociology postulated that CMC has become a new variety of language (Crystal 2001). CMC is defined by December (1997: 1) as "a process of human communication via computers involving people, situated in particular contexts, engaging in processes to shape media for a variety of purposes". Differently worded, CMC is any form of human-to-human communication that is partially or entirely assisted by computers.

CMC is of two types: asynchronous (ACMC) and synchronous (SCMC). ACMC refers to interactions that occur gradually over time when people send and respond to messages via email, blog posts, or social media posts. SCMC refers to interaction which happens in real time when people are online and immediately exchange messages via WeChat, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Facebook Messenger (Bekar and Christiansen 2018). The focus of this study is on SCMC, where users communicate by announcing their obituary announcements on Facebook for different reasons.

With the advent of CMC, things became easier, though online social media sites were still in the distant future. However, the development of smartphones as a new technology or platform helped to make the shift from CMC to Mobile Media and Communication (MMC), and to rebuild the structure of contemporary society. In short, the technical landscape has seen a dramatic shift from computer to mobile media and communication.

Mobile media technology is just another platform that is integrated into the framework of modern civilization. It is arguable that the most customized and personalized digital mediation tool available in the modern technological landscape is even more than a computer or laptop. The smartphone provides a multitude of "affordances" (Yao and Ling 2020) on an individual basis. But when we take into account that mobile phone technology connects nearly two-thirds of the world's population, its role and societal impact go far beyond digital mediation. Our smartphones allow us to access information at any time and from any location. In the same vein, Campbell (2020: 102) displayed the development of mobile communication from communication via phone devices to a whole mobile media and communication system. This changed the structure of peoples' social lives by enabling "sociality" (the ability to connect and disengage from interpersonal relationships) and "spatiality" (the ability to connect and disconnect from spaces).

1.2 **Genre**

In the last couple of decades, many prior studies on the concept of genre exhibited considerable attention by academic researchers in different fields, such as linguistics and discourse analysis (Al-Ali 2005; Guendouz and Al-Shuaibi 2022). According to Merriam Webster dictionary, this term first originated from the French word "le genre" to mean type, sort or kind. Miller (1984: 159) defines genre as typified rhetorical actions based in recurring situations". She establishes that 'genre' is a part of social action that can be found in any discourse and that has a defined scope. Moreover, Swales (1990: 58) in his technical definition of 'genre' says that: "A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of

which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre."

Swales' definition highlights the significance of communicative events, communicative purposes and the discourse community in shaping and defining the term 'genre'. Martín (1992: 505) refers to genre as "the way people use language to live, mobilize and interact with the world outside." For him, 'genre' is a staged, goal-orientated and social process, that is to say 'genre' has different shades of meaning to achieve the goal of interaction in different cultures.

To sum up, 'genre' as a concept has been used mainly to refer to the kind of words since Swales' time till now. This basic meaning does not change over time, but new considerations were taken to capture the accurate meaning of this concept (communicative purpose, social function and discourse community). Accordingly, 'genre' is defined as communicative events which communicate a defined set of communicative purposes in order to help accomplish a set of social functions in discourse community (Bawarshi and Reiff 2010: 21).

1.3 Obituary

There is a growing interest in implementing genres in what Miller (1984) describes as 'homely' discourses—common everyday forms of communication such as birth, death, and wedding notices. These are considered socially constructed text genres that are easily recognizable and predictable. Johns (1997:6) defines homely discourse as "a recognizable socially constructed text genre of everyday language." Examples include wedding invitations, birth notices, and obituary announcements. These texts are comprehensible through their tags and provide readers with a clear summary of their content. Among these, obituaries stand out as a universally recognized form of homely discourse in newspapers. As Chaudhry (2018) explains, an obituary is a formal announcement of a person's death, offering personal and biographical details about the deceased, as well as information on funeral arrangements.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Previous research on obituaries (Al-Ali 2005; Matiki 2001; Al-Khatib and Salem 2011; Zubaidi 2014; Sawalmeh 2019 and Muhammad 2020) have almost exclusively focused on some aspects of the obituarial discourse (newspaper obituaries), ignoring online obituaries, which poses some problems, especially in the phase of analysis. Unfortunately, these works were limited in their scope of research, mainly focusing on some disciplines like social sciences and anthropology. In addition, their analysis relied only on printed sources of data, particularly journals, magazines and newspapers. Given that, there is a need for a multidimensional study that covers all the linguistic, social and cultural aspects of this genre, using more natural data (online and printed obituaries).

Based on what has previously been discussed, it is worth mentioning that despite all the broader literature of obituary announcements, few researchers have

addressed Facebook obituaries in Jordan (Al-Shboul 2013; Hamdan and Al-Sayyed 2022). However, no single piece of research has addressed Facebook obituaries in both Algerian and Jordanian contexts. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap in both of theory and practice. Theoretically, it covers the sociocultural perspectives of Algerian and Jordanian societies. Practically, it paves the way for further analysis of online obituaries. Additionally, it will help researchers to become more familiar with different cultures, potentially contributing to further cultural studies.

To this end, the present study aims to conduct a genre analysis of Algerian and Jordanian Facebook obituary announcements. It investigates the expressions of death announcements published on Facebook to identify, describe and analyze the structure of these notices, their generic component, and their communicative functions. Accordingly, this study attempts to capture the similarities and differences between obituaries in both societies in terms of structure. The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the generic structures of Algerian and Jordanian obituaries on Facebook?
2. What are the similarities and differences between obituaries in each society in terms of structure?

1.5 Significance

The last two decades have witnessed a growing interest in studying the genre analysis of obituary notifications as unique communication events (Sawalmeh 2019). Following the course of previous research in this field (Fries 1990; Matiki 2001; Al-Ali 2005; Al-Khatib and Salem 2011; AlZubaidi 2014; Sawalmeh 2019 ; Muhammad 2020), the present research is a multi-dimensional study of Algerian and Jordanian obituaries posted on Facebook.

2. Review of related literature

Over time, an extensive literature has been dedicated to the study of obituarial discourse as a different genre to investigate the underlying social and cultural beliefs of this genre. Most of the prior research on obituary announcements was conducted based on newspaper contexts (Fries 1990; Matiki 2001; Al-Ali 2005; Al-Khatib and Salem 2011; AlZubaidi 2014; Sawalmeh 2019 and Muhammad 2020). However, there are no studies on online obituaries. As such, this literature review will refer to some studies about death and grieving in newspapers.

Fries (1990) compared the structure of English and German death notices published in newspapers. The yielded results revealed that English and German obituaries both have obligatory moves such as '*the name of the deceased'* and optional moves *such as 'announcing the death' 'time and place of death', 'age of the deceased'* and *'the announcer'*. He noted that English and German obituaries are very similar; both used conventionalized language and placed the names of the sender and receiver in the same position. In addition, both types of obituaries rarely used photographs of the deceased. He concluded that German notices were different from English ones in the layout; English announcements were shorter than German ones.

By the same token, Matiki (2001) examined the obituaries published in Malawian newspapers. For this purpose, 63 announcements were analyzed using Gasparov's (1978) Framework. The findings revealed that unlike the age of the deceased, gender had no influence on the way Malawian obituaries were constructed. While English was used in writing adults' obituaries, Chichewa was used for children. The results also established Malawian obituaries had eight thematic features or moves; *photograph of the deceased, his/her name, his/her date and time of death, his/her of funeral, message, announcer (s)/ sender (s) and acknowledgment of other people' assistance*. Matiki (2001) concluded that Malawian obituaries were addressed mainly to the deceased rather than the readers.

Al-Ali (2005) analyzed the generic structures of death notices in Jordanian newspapers. He selected 200 obituaries from two Jordanian newspapers. Using the Swalesian (1990) move analysis approach, the study findings displayed that the Jordanian announcements had nine generic moves: *opening, heading, announcing the occasion, identifying the deceased, specifying surviving relatives, situating circumstances of death, outlining funeral and burial arrangements for receiving condolences and closing*. He exhibited that the language used in writing these notices was religious, characterized by the use of Quranic verses and Hadith. He concluded that Jordanian obituaries not only announced the death of people, but also communicated different information about the social and cultural norms of the society.

In a cross-cultural study, Al Khatib and Salem (2011) examined the social and cultural practices of Jordanian and British obituaries. They adhered to Nwoye's (1992) genre analysis framework to analyze 300 announcements. Their results demonstrated that Jordanian and British obituaries had some features in common such as*: the opening, funeral arrangements, time and place for receiving condolences, the deceased's family, and the deceased's profession*. However, they differed in other features such as*: the identification of the announcer, the time of death, telegraphing the deceased's family, and mentioning the announcer's telephone number*. Furthermore, the findings underlined that the Jordanian obituaries were lengthier in contrast to British ones. The researchers further concluded that Jordanian and British obituaries showed significant differences in terms of linguistic, structural and functional features.

In a similar study, Al Zubaidi (2014) explored the sociocultural aspects and schematic structures of Iraqi obituaries. The researcher opted for 150 death announcements collected from three Iraqi newspapers. Adopting Swales' (1990) genre analysis model, the findings showed that Iraqi newspapers consisted of eleven structural moves; four obligatory (*announcing the death, identifying the deceased, identifying arrangements for receiving condolences, invoking God*) and seven optional (*opening, heading, identifying the announcer, identifying surviving relatives, identifying circumstances of death, closing, signing out*). Al Zubaidi (2014) further highlighted that the sociocultural beliefs were encoded in the language of Iraqi newspapers. He concluded that the social status of the deceased influenced the writing in Iraqi newspapers: obituaries of important people were larger in size unlike obituaries of normal people.

In the same vein, Sawalmeh (2019) investigated the sociocultural structure of Muslim and Christian obituaries published in a Jordanian newspaper (Al Rai). Using Bhatia (1993) genre analysis framework, he examined 150 Muslim announcements and 100 Christian notices. The study established that Jordanian obituaries were formed of eleven communicative moves; three obligatory (*announcing the death, identifying the deceased, arrangements for receiving condolences*) and eight optional (*opening, heading, photo of the deceased, identifying surviving relatives, identifying circumstances of death, funeral and burial arrangements, notifications and closing*). The study sustained that the socio-religious identity was an important aspect in both Muslim and Christian obituaries. He concluded that Muslim and Christian obituaries also used euphemistic words and phrases to denote death in the Jordanian community.

In a recent study, Muhammad (2020) investigated Kurdish obituaries in Erbil. Her study aimed to capture their sociocultural and linguistic features. For this purpose, the researcher compiled a corpus of 60 obituaries from public places, such as walls of mosques, buildings and shops. She adopted Swales (1990) genre analysis framework. Muhammad (2020) concluded that Kurdish obituaries were composed of three obligatory moves; *signaling the event*, *identifying the deceased* and *funeral arrangements*, and four optional ones *; reference to next of kin*, *date of death*, *cause of death* and *death as truth*. Similarly, the study deposited that Kurdish obituaries were characterized by the use of some syntactic features such as; words, phrases and sentences. She sustained that the social, cultural and religious practices of the Kurdish people were realized in their announcements through the generic moves.

From a sociocultural perspective, Afful (2020) conducted a genre analysis of death announcements in Ghanaian newspapers. His purpose was to examine the structural and the linguistic features of the obituary genre in Ghana. The findings pointed out that Ghanaian obituaries contain seven generic moves; five obligatory (*caption, list of family members, clan, organizations and others, profile of the deceased, funeral arrangement, list of family members (survivors)*) and two optional (*dress code and invitation to sympathizers, well-wishers).* In addition, the yielded results deposited that the Ghanaian obituaries used specific lexico-grammatical features such as nominal, declarative and imperative verbs, and the active and passive voice. He concluded that death announcements might vary depending on different factors like gender, age and status of the deceased.

In a similar study, Sabbatino, Bostan and Klinger (2020) explored American, English and Canadian obituaries from three websites: *The Daily Item*, *Remembering CA* and *The London Free Press*. The study revealed that all three types of obituaries have different information, such as: Personal Information, Biographical Sketch, Family, Characteristics, Tribute, Gratitude and Funeral Information.

Laurila (2022) examined the structural development of death notices published in the American newspaper *The New York Times*. The findings indicated that there were some similarities and differences between American and English newspapers. In addition to that, thirteen moves were discovered (Name, Verbs

denoting death, Date, Place, Circumstances, Occupation, Relation, Age, Grief, Funeral, Requests, Other information).

From a pragmatic point of view, Afful (2020) investigated the pragmatic features of the write-ups on obituary posters on social media (Facebook and WhatsApp). He found that these write-ups represent the different sociocultural beliefs and thoughts. He concluded that language impacted the social and the psychological situation of both people and societies.

From the review of the literature, it appears that the previous research on obituaries, such as (Fries 1990; Matiki 2001; Al-Ali 2005; Al Khatib and Salem 2011; Al Zubaidi 2014; Sawalmeh 2019; Muhammad 2020 among others) can only be considered a first step towards a more profound understanding of the generic structure of obituary announcements. These studies have almost exclusively focused on some aspects of the obituarial discourse (newspaper obituaries), such as English and German newspapers (Fries 1990), Malawian newspapers (Matiki 2001), Jordanian newspapers (Al-Ali 2005; Al Khatib and Salem 2011; Sawalmeh 2019), Iraqi newspapers (Al Zubaidi 2014), and Ghanaian newspapers (Afful 2020). Ignoring online obituaries poses some problems, especially in the phase of analysis.

Unfortunately, these works are limited in their scope of research, mainly focusing on some disciplines like social sciences and anthropology. In addition, their analysis rely only on printed sources of data particularly journals, magazines and newspapers. Given that, it is necessary to conduct a multidisciplinary study that incorporates all the linguistic, social and cultural aspects of this genre and uses more natural data (online and printed obituaries). In light of the preceding discussions, it is important to note that, in spite of the extensive body of literature on obituaries, no single study has been conducted on online obituaries (Facebook obituaries) in the contexts of Jordan and Algeria.

3. Methodology

This part is intended to describe the methodology adopted in the study. It discusses the corpus of the study, the data collection procedures and the analytical framework used to analyze the data.

3.1 The corpus

The corpus of the present study consists of 240 Arabic obituary announcements: (120 Algerian and 120 Jordanian). These announcements are collected from different Algerian and Jordanian Facebook pages.

3.2 Data collection

The sampled obituaries span over a period of five months, from the 1st January to 31st May 2022, to observe the significant differences in the structure of these obituaries during this period. They were purposively selected from several Algerian and Jordanian Facebook pages, since the authors are familiar with both Algerian and Jordanian societies. The Algerian and Jordanian announcements were screenshotted and saved to be classified and analyzed.

3.3 Data Analysis

In order to achieve the aims of the present study, a mixed method was adopted. Hanson, Clark, Petska, and Creswell (2005: 224) defined the mixed method research as "the collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data in a single or multiphase study". Simply worded, this study opted for both a quantitative and qualitative analysis, with more emphasis on the latter. The two approaches will help to analyze the nature of Facebook obituaries as a new genre. Thus, the qualitative account is conducted to understand the underlying process of obituary writings. It offers more insight about the generic structure, the communicative purposes and the rhetorical, as well as the linguistic features of this kind of announcements. On the other hand, the quantitative conduct provides tables and frequencies to identify the structural order of the rhetorical moves and the obligatory and optional elements of these announcements.

Moreover, two stages of data analysis are performed: identification of macro structural features (textual moves), identification of micro linguistic features (syntactic, rhetorical, and semantic). To begin with, the selected obituaries are observed and examined to extract and identify the generic moves. After the identification of the textual moves, their linguistic features are determined through analyzing the contextual parameters of the announcements.

3.4 Bhatia's genre analysis

Bhatia (1993) develops his own framework of genre analysis based on what Swales (1986) has presented to the field of genre analysis. His framework combines all the aspects of genre under study, its purpose of analysis and background knowledge. This model is comprehensive, flexible and covers all aspects of genre. It also gives researchers the right to choose the appropriate moves and steps for their genre. His model is process-oriented and consists of seven steps:

i. Placing the given genre text in a situational context
ii. Surveying existing literature
iii. Refining the situational/ contextual analysis
iv. Selecting corpus
v. Studying the institutional context
vi. Levels of linguistic analysis
    Level 1: Analysis of lexical features
    Level 2: Analysis of text-patterning or textualization
    Level 3: Structural interpretation
vii. Specialist information in genre analysis.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Quantitative analysis

4.1.1. The analysis of macro-structural features of the obituary genre (textual moves)

Our analysis of the Jordanian and Algerian obituaries has identified eleven generic moves that characterize the structure of obituaries in the Algerian and the Jordanian contexts, as shown in Table [2] below. The rhetorical moves in the corpus occur either as obligatory or optional, as shown in Table [1]. That is to say, moves that occur in all announcements are considered obligatory (with a move frequency of 100%). Moves that appear quite often in the obituaries' corpus are labeled as optional (with a move frequency of less than 100%). Putting it differently, a move is deemed obligatory if it appears in 100 percent of the data, whereas it is considered optional if it appears less often.

Table 1. Frequency based move classification (Adapted from Nodoushan and Khakbaz 2011: 116)

Move Classification	Frequency of occurrence (%)
Obligatory	100
Optional	less than 100

In the following section, the frequencies and percentages of the textual moves used in the corpus of Algerian and Jordanian obituaries are tabulated and discussed. Therefore, eleven generic moves are present in the announcements as in Table [2]:

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of the total generic moves present in Algerian and Jordanian obituaries

No	Type of Move	Frequency of occurrence		Percentage of occurrence (%)		Obligatory/ Optional	
		Algerian	Jordanian	Algerian	Jordanian	Algerian	Jordanian
M 1	Opening	14	110	12	92	Optional	Optional
M 2	Heading	98	98	82	82	Optional	Optional
M 3	Announcing the death	120	120	100	100	Obligatory	Obligatory
M 4	Identifying the deceased	120	120	100	100	Obligatory	Obligatory
M 5	Photo of the deceased	54	27	45	23	Optional	Optional
M 6	Identifying surviving relatives	105	105	88	88	Optional	Optional
M 7	Identifying circumstances of death	120	89	100	74	Obligatory	Optional
M 8	Funeral and burial arrangements	120	105	100	88	Obligatory	Optional
M 9	Arrangements for receiving condolences	77	120	64	100	Optional	Obligatory
M 10	Notifications	36	77	30	64	Optional	Optional
M11	Closing	101	94	84	78	Optional	Optional

The most frequent moves in the Algerian corpus are: Move 3, *Announcing the death,* Move 4, *Identifying the deceased,* Move 7, *identifying circumstances of death,* and Move 8, *Funeral and burial arrangements,* as they record 100%. Therefore, they are obligatory moves in Algerian corpus of obituaries.

On the other hand, the most frequent moves in the Jordanian corpus are: Move 3, *Announcing the death,* Move 4, *Identifying the deceased* and Move 9, *Arrangements for receiving condolences,* accounting for 100 percent and considered obligatory moves.

It is also noted that the second most frequent move in the Algerian obituaries is Move 6, *Identifying surviving relatives,* accounting for 88%, while the second most frequent move in the Jordanian corpus is Move 1, *Opening,* as it stands at 92%.

The third most frequent move in Algerian obituaries is Move 11, *Closing,* having a frequency rate of 84%; however, Move 6, *Identifying surviving relatives,* and Move 8, *Funeral and burial arrangements,* are the third most frequent moves in the Jordanian corpus, appearing in 88% of the corpus. Move 1, *Opening,* is the least frequent move used by Algerians in their obituaries, as it records only 12% of the entire corpus, proving to be optional. In opposition to that, Move 5, *Photo of the deceased,* is the least frequent move in the Jordanian corpus as it records the lowest percentage in the Jordanian obituaries, 23 %, and is shown to be optional.

Table [2] clearly shows that Algerian obituaries consist of four obligatory moves (Move 3, *Announcing the death,* Move 4, *Identifying the deceased,* Move 7, *Identifying circumstances of death* and Move 8, *Funeral and burial arrangements*), whereas Jordanian announcements have only three obligatory moves (Move 3, *Announcing the death,* Move 4, *Identifying the deceased,* and Move 9, *Arrangements for receiving condolences*). Obviously, Algerian and Jordanian obituaries share the same common obligatory moves Move 3, *Announcing the death,* Move 4, *Identifying the deceased*. That is to say, in both Algerian and Jordanian obituaries, Moves 3 and 4 should be present.

For the optional moves, Algerian announcements contain seven moves (Move 1, "*Opening",* Move 2 "*Heading"*, Move 5 *"Photo of the deceased",* Move 6" *Identifying surviving relatives",* Move 9 "*Arrangements for receiving condolences",* Move 10 *"Notifications*" and Move 11 *"Closing".* Whereas, Jordanian ones have eight optional (Move 1 "*Opening"*, Move 2 "*Heading"*, Move 5 "*Photo of the decease",* Move 6 "*Identifying surviving relatives",* Move 7 "*Identifying circumstances of death",* Move 8 *"Funeral and burial arrangements",* Move 10 "*Notifications"* and Move 11, *Closing*). Apparently, Algerian and Jordanian announcements are similar in that they both share six optional moves, (Move 1, "*Opening",* Move 2 "*Heading"*, Move 5 *"Photo of the deceased",* Move 6" *Identifying surviving relatives",* Move 10 *"Notifications*" and Move 11 *"Closing".*

4.2. **Qualitative analysis**

4.2.1. Macro-structural features of the obituary genre

In the following section, the rhetorical moves employed by Algerians and Jordanians in their obituary announcements will be presented, defined and detailed with illustrative examples.

The first generic move in the obituary is the 'opening'. It is called 'opening' since it opens the announcement (Al-Ali 2005). This move is considered as a pre-heading component and is presented as the starting point for the obituary genre. It takes the form of either direct quotation from the holy Quran or a verse from the Bible. In the present study, the opening move has only one form: that of Quranic verses. The communicative goal of the opening move is to introduce the obituary announcements to the reader. This move occurs in 12% of AOAs and 92 percent of JOAs and appears to be optional. The optional status of Move 1 "opening" is reported in previous studies (Al-Ali 2005; Al-Khatib and Salem 2011; Al Zubaidi 2014; Sawalmeh 2019). Consider the following examples from Qur'anic verses used in the opening of Algerian and Jordanian obituaries.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
***كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ.**
صدق الله العظيم

"/*bismillahi rraħma:ni rraħi:m*
Kullu man ʕalajha: fa:nin wa jabqa: waʤhu rabbika ðu: lʤala:li wa lʔikra:m.
ṣadaqa allahu lʕaḍi:m/"
"In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Everyone on it is perishing But will remain the Presence of your Lord, Full of Majesty and Splendor. Allah Almighty is Truthful.*"
(Sura Ar-Rahmaan, verse 26 -27).

The second generic move in the obituary genre is 'the heading'. This move occurs as head or title for the obituary announcements. Its communicative purpose is to present an indication of the content of the obituary announcements and thus help readers in knowing and understanding more about what is written in the obituary text. In other words, the heading move informs the readers about the theme and the content of the announcement (a report of death). This communicative move is written in bold in a separate line and with a different font size.

In this study, the heading move occurred equally in the Algerian and the Jordanian announcements, accounting for 82 percent in both contexts, noting it as an optional move in the obituary genre. This result is in agreement with Al-Ali (2005), Al Zubaidi (2014) and Sawalmeh (2019). Consider the following example:

نعي حاج فاضل

/naʕj ħa:ʤ fa:ḍil/
"Obituary announcement of a virtuous old man"

The third move 'Announcing the death' reports the death occasion and lists the announcers of the obituary. The announcers of the obituary can be the family of the deceased, his/ her friend, members of the deceased's tribe or community, or they may be an official representative. It is written in big and bold font. The communicative purpose of this move is to announce the death to the public so that others can join in the bereavement occasion. In 'announcing the death', Algerian

and Jordanian obituarists report the death of their father, mother, wife, husband, son, daughter, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, grandfather, grandmother, great-grandmother or great-grandfather...etc. In this study this move is shown to be an obligatory move in both the Algerian and the Jordanian corpus accounting for 100%. This appears to be consistent with Al-Ali (2005) and Sawalmeh (2019). Consider the following example:

إيمانا بقضاء الله وقدره تعلن عائلة حرز الله وبهلولي عن وفاة الأب

/ʔi:ma:nan biqaḍa:ʔi alla:hi waqadarihi tuʕlinu ʕa:ʔilat ħarz alla wa bahlu:li ʕan wafa:ti alʔab/

"Believing in God's will and destiny, the Herz Allah and Bahlouli family announces the death of the father."

In the fourth move 'Identifying the deceased' the obituarist identifies the person who died and his/ her title (educational and professional) as well as his/her societal position (if any). The communicative goal of this move is to present the deceased to the readers. Move 4, "Identifying the deceased" is an obligatory move in the Algerian and the Jordanian announcements, as it appears in 100 percent of the corpus. This is in line with Al-Ali (2005), Al-Khatib and Salem (2011), Sawalmeh (2019) and Muhammad (2020), among others. The following are some examples of this move:

الطالبة آية عبد الله الجوهري

/aṭṭa:liba ʔa:jah ʕabdalla: alʤo:hari/

"The student, Aya Abdullah Al-Johary"

المحامي بورحلة فريد بن عمار

/almuħa:mi bu:raħla fari:d bin ʕamma:r/

"Lawyer Bourahla Farid ibn Ammar"

The fifth move in the obituary announcement is 'Photo of the deceased'. This move has no linguistic realization, unlike other moves. In this move the announcer places the photo of the dead person in the announcement to enhance its communicative value. The communicative goal of this move is to enable people who know the deceased to match the name with the photo. In accordance with Fries (1990) and Sawalmeh (2019), our findings reveal that Move 5 is optional in both data, accounting for 45 percent in the Algerian and 23 percent in the Jordanian corpus.

In the sixth move 'Identifying surviving relatives', the obituarist lists the names and the social, educational or professional titles of the deceased's surviving family members (children, spouse, grandchildren, nephews, cousins, nieces, aunts, uncles …etc.) and relatives that have blood ties with the deceased. Those who are not related to the deceased are not included in the relative list. The communicative purpose of this move is to tell readers about the departed's surviving relatives so that they can share their sympathy and sorrow with them. In the corpus at hand, Move 6 appears to be optional in both Algerian and Jordanian obituaries accounting

for the same frequency (88%). This outcome seems to concur with previous studies of Al-Ali (2005), Al Zubaidi (2014), and Sawalmeh (2019). Below is an illustration of the Move 6:

والد كل من القاضي عامر و الدكتور مصطفى و الأستاذ عبد الله و الدكتورة اسراء
/wa:lid kullin mina-lqa:di: ʕa:mir wa-dduktu:r musṭafa: wa- lʔusta:ð ʕabdalla: wa-dduktu:ra ʔisra:ʔ/
"The father of Judge Amer, Dr. Mustafa, Professor Abdullah and Dr. Israa"

The seventh move in the obituary genre is 'Identifying circumstances of death'. This move determines the circumstances of death, providing the date, the day, the place and the cause of death, in addition to the age of the deceased. The communicative purpose behind this move is to provide readers with information concerning the circumstances of death. This move is found to be obligatory in Algerian announcements, and optional in Jordanian announcements, accounting for 100 percent and 74 percent, respectively.

The obligatory elements of this move in Algerian announcements is in accordance with Al-Ali (2005). The optionality elements of this move in Jordanian announcements is consistent with those of Al-Zubaidi (2014) and Sawalmeh (2019). This move is manifested using five sub-moves or steps: the date of the death, the day of the death, the age of the deceased, the place of the death and the cause of the death.

The death date of the deceased is introduced by the word "coinciding" (الموافق ʔalmuwa:fiq), then the day, the month and the year. It is displayed using the Gregorian system or the Islamic Hijri system for some religious purposes. As far as the day of death is concerned, it is preceded by part of day times such as "morning" (صباحا ṣaba:ħan), "evening" (مساءًا masa:ʔan), followed by the day of week in which the death occurred such as "Thursday" (ʔalxami:s). The age of the deceased is realized in most cases using the phrase "at the age of" (عن عمر يناهز ʕan ʕumr juna:hiz), followed by the age of the deceased. The place of death is either placed before the date, the day and the age of death as in:

الذي انتقل إلى رحمة الله في الأردن اليوم الجمعة 2021/04/09
/allaði: ntaqal ʔila: raħmati lla:hi fi:-lʔurdun aljawm alʤumuʕa 04/09/2021/
"He who moved to the Almighty God's mercy in Jordan today, Friday 04/09/2021"
or after them as in:

التي انتقلت إلى رحمة الله اليوم الثلاثاء 15 آذار في عمان – الأردن
/allati ntaqalat ʔila: raħmati lla:hi aljawm aθθulaθa:ʔ 15 ʔa**:**ða:r fi: ʔamma:n/
"she who moved to the Almighty God today, Tuesday, March 15, in Amman – Jordan"

When it comes to the cause of death, this sub move is featured using "effect" (اثر ʔiθr), and then citing the cause of death like a heart attack, chronic disease, an automobile accident or a drowning incident.

The eighth move 'Funeral and burial arrangements' identifies the funeral and burial plans and prayers so that the deceased's relatives can participate in the ceremonies. The communicative goal of this move is to provide readers with information about funeral and burial activities needed by relatives, friends and colleagues, as well as all the sympathizers of the deceased to participate in these rituals. It provides information related to the date, the time, the mosque where the prayer will take place, as well as the burial ground where the body of the deceased will be laid to rest. This move is obligatory in Algerian obituaries and optional in Jordanian ones as it appears in 100 percent and 88 percent of the announcements, respectively. The optionality status of this move in the Jordanian corpus is in agreement with Al-Ali (2005) and Sawalmeh (2019). Consider the following example:

و سيشيع جثمانها الطاهر بعد صلاة عصر يوم الأربعاء 31/02/2022 من مسجد قباء الكائن في خريبة السوق حي العلكومية إلى مثواها الأخير في مقابر سحاب الاسلامية.

/wasaju/ajjaʕ ʤuθma:nuha: aṭta:hir baʕda ṣala:ti *ʕasr jawam lʔarbiʕa:ʔ 02/31/2022 min masʤid quba:ʔ lkaʔin fi: xrajbat-assu:q ħaj lʕalku:mijjah ʔila: maθwaha ʔalʔaxi:r fi: maqa:bir saħa:b lʕisla:mijja/*

"The pure body of the deceased will be laid to rest after Asr prayer on Wednesday 02/31/2022 from the Quba Mosque located in Kherbet Al-Souq, Al-Alkoumiya neighborhood, to its final resting place in Sahab Islamic Cemetery."

In the ninth move 'Arrangements for receiving condolences', the obituarist presents more details for the readers. The communicative purpose of this move is to provide crucial details people can use to express their sorrow to the deceased family or surviving relatives. This move is optional in Algerian announcements as it occurs in 64 percent of the corpus and is obligatory in the Jordanian corpus as it appears in 100 percent of the announcements. This result is similar with those of Al-Ali's (2005), Al-Khatib and Salem's (2011) Al Zubaidi (2014) and Sawalmeh (2019). Consider the following example:

تقبل التعازي للرجال بعد صلاة العصر في ديوان عشيرة الفواعير/ البحيرة السلط و للنساء بعد الساعة الرابعة بمنزل ابنه القاضي عامر بمنطقة الحمرا، شارع فلاح الزبيدي- بجانب مسجد التوحيد و لمدة ثلاثة أيام.

/tuqbal attaʕa:zi lirriʤa:l baʕda ṣala:ti lʕaṣr fi: di:wan ʕaʃi:rat lfawa:ʕi:r - lbuħajra aṣṣalṭ wa linnisa:ʔ baʕda-ssaʕa arra:biʕa bimanzil ʔibnihi alqa:di: ʕa:mir bimantiqat lħamra, ʃa:riʕ fala:ħ azzu:bajdi - biʤa:nib masʤid attawħi:d wa limuddat θala:θat ʔajja:m/

"Condolences are received for men after the Asr prayer in the guesthouse of the Al-Fawair clan / Al-Buhaira/ Al-Salt and for women after four o'clock at his son's house, Judge Amer, in Al-Hamr area, Falah Al-Zubaidi Street - next to Al-Tawheed Mosque, for a period of three days."

The tenth move 'Notifications' provides more details about receiving condolences: notices about mobile phone numbers, fax number or email address of the deceased's family so that the relatives, friends and colleagues who are abroad can be part of this occasion and express their sorrow and condolences via calls, emails, telegraphs and faxes etc…. This move is optional in both Algerian and Jordanian obituaries, accounting for 30% and 64% respectively. Consider the following examples:

للتواصل و التعازي ... ابو ايهاب 0777XXXXX

/*littawa:ṣul wa-ttaʕa:zi*/ … Abu Ihab 0777XXXXX)

"Contact and condolences … Abu Ihab 0777XXXXX"

The eleventh move 'closing' ends the announcement. The obituarist closes the announcement using various rhetorical expressions such as: direct quotation from the Holy Quran ("*ʔina: lilla:h waʔina: ʔilajhi ra:ʤiʕu:n*" /Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return), asking for Allah's mercy for the deceased, invocation, and requesting to recite Surat Al-Fatiha ("*nasʔalukum ʔalfatiħa*" / We ask you for Al- Fatiha), as well as Dua or prayer for the deceased soul to rest in peace. This move appears to be an optional move in both Algerian and Jordanian corpora, as it occurs in 84% and 78%, respectively. This result appears to be in accordance with Al-Ali's (2005), Al Zubaidi (2014) and Sawalmeh (2019). Consider the following example:

الرب اخذ والرب أعطى

/*ʔarrab ʔaxað wa-rrab ʔaʕṭa:*/

"The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away"

5. Discussion

Drawing on Bhatia's (1993) approach to genre analysis, the results reveal that the Algerian and Jordanian obituary genre on Facebook consists of eleven structural moves, including two obligatory (Move 3 and Move 4) and nine optional (Move 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11). The study further clarifies that each of these moves has a specific structure that significantly contributes to its communicative goal, which, in turn, supports the overall communicative purpose of the obituary genre.

Furthermore, our analysis reveals both similarities and differences between Algerian and Jordanian obituaries. The similarities include the optionality of Moves 1, 2, 5, 6, 10 and 11 and the obligatory status of Moves 3 and 4. However, the two differ in the status of Moves 7, 8 and 9. In Algerian announcements, Moves 7 and 8 are obligatory but optional in the Jordanian ones. Conversely, Move 9 is obligatory in Jordanian announcements but optional in Algerian ones.

This study further shows two of the most significant factors in the writing of the Algerian and Jordanian obituary announcements, namely, religion and socio-economic status. As for religion, many religious features and expressions are found to be prevalent in the corpus of Algerian and Jordanian obituaries. These expressions, in fact, shape the social and religious identity of the obituarist, as well as the family and relatives of the deceased. For example, the use of Quranic verses,

Prophet Hadith and sayings and expressions with religious background, such as: In the name of Allah (بسم الله /*bismillah/)*, Allah *(*الله /*ʔallah/)*, mosque (مسجد /*masʤid/*).

Regarding the socio-economic status, the study reveals the use of many features that reflect the social status of the deceased, his/ her family and his/ her relatives. In the corpus of Algerian and Jordanian obituaries, the reference to the social status is evident in Moves 4, 6 and 7. The socio-economic marker is evidenced by the mention of academic and professional titles of the deceased (Move 4) and the surviving relatives (Move 6), for example: 'doctor', 'engineer', 'pharmacist'. Another marker is the place of death (Move 7). Citing the place of death reflects the high social status of the deceased and his/her family, especially if he/she died abroad, such as in France, Germany, or the United States of America.

Finally, the present study pinpoints that Algerian and Jordanian obituarists use euphemistic expressions to soften the offensive mention of death. For example, moved to Almighty God's mercy (انتقل إلى رحمة ربه /*ʔintaqal ʔila: raħmat ʔallah/*) "He moved to his Lord's side" (انتقل إلى جوار ربه /*ʔintaqala ʔila: ʤiwa:ri rabbihi/*). As such, death is not deemed as an end; it is a journey where the departed moves from one place to another. The use of these euphemistic expressions disguises reality by giving death a better face.

6. Conclusion

Overall, this study reveals the generic structure of Algerian and Jordanian obituary announcements posted on Facebook. It also identifies and describes the textual moves of these announcements. To this end, the quantitative and the qualitative analyses are couched within the Bhatia (1993) genre analysis framework. The findings of the study show that eleven generic moves are used in Algerian and Jordanian obituaries posted on Facebook.

The findings further indicate that although Algerian and Jordanian obituaries have some similarities in Moves 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, they differ in Moves 7, 8 and 9. Some differences are also depicted in Moves 10 and 11. In addition, the present study shows that Algerian and Jordanian obituary announcements not only announce and publish the death incident but also convey some hidden messages about Algerian and Jordanian social, cultural and religious conventions and practices, which are encoded in the generic structure of obituary announcements.

7. Recommendations

Future studies in the genre domain are required, especially in Arabic Also, cross-cultural and ethnic studies are required to explore whether there are similarities and differences in death announcements such as Amazigh in Algeria, Kurds or Armenians in Jordan and / or in other Arabic contexts.

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