

UNDERSTANDING THE FUNCTIONS OF JORDANIANS' PINNED FACEBOOK STATUS: SOCIO-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This qualitative study attempted to investigate the functions of Jordanians' Facebook pinned statuses. It aims to achieve the following objectives; finding out the functions of pinned Facebook statuses used by Jordanians and types of speech acts utilized in these statuses.

Methodology/design/approach: The study gathered and examined 470 statuses for this reason. The sample of the study was chosen based on the convenience sampling method from Facebook users.

Results and conclusion: The findings revealed that there were six main functions for the statuses used by Jordanians. These functions are religious, sayings, personal, family, and miscellaneous respectively. Additionally, the data gathered fell under two main speech acts, which are assertive (89%) and expressive (11%).

Recommendations: To conduct future studies that investigate these statuses based on various variables such as age, gender education different cultures, etc.

Keywords: speech acts, pinned Facebook statuses, jordanian speech community.

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COMPREENENDO AS FUNÇÕES DO FACEBOOK DOS JORDANIANOS ESTATUTO: ANÁLISE SOCIOPRAGMÁTICA

RESUMO

Propósito: Esse estudo qualitativo tentou investigar as funções dos status presos do Facebook dos jordanianos. O objetivo é atingir os seguintes objetivos: descobrir as funções dos status presos do Facebook usados por jordanianos e os tipos de atos de discurso utilizados nesses status.

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Metodologia/projeto/abordagem: O estudo reuniu e examinou 470 status por esta razão. A amostra do estudo foi escolhida com base no método de amostragem de conveniência dos usuários do Facebook.

Resultados e conclusão: As descobertas revelaram que havia seis funções principais para os status utilizados pelos jordanianos. Essas funções são religiosas, ditos, pessoais, familiares e diversas, respectivamente. Além disso, os dados coletados caíram sob dois atos de discurso principais, que são assertivos (89%) e expressivos (11%).

Recomendações: Realizar estudos futuros que investiguem esses status com base em várias variáveis, como idade, educação de gênero, diferentes culturas etc.

Palavras-chave: atos de discurso, status do Facebook fixado, comunidade de discurso jordaniana.

1 INTRODUCTION

The use of social media networking has been more prevalent in people's lives across all age groups with the invention of smartphones. Now, anyone can evaluate their social media account whenever and wherever they want. Due to the tool's accessibility in one's pocket, the possibility of conversing virtually with others has risen. Because of these factors, people frequently share instantaneous images, movies, and other media with anybody they choose. This is due to estimates showing that the majority of individuals in developed nations now own smartphones (Raiman, Antbring, & Mahmood, 2017). According to Cvjecovic (2010), the development of computer-mediated communication (CMC), a text-based form of communication between people using internet-connected computers, represents a significant shift in human communication. Texture is the name given by (Crystal, 2006) to the language variety that predominately characterizes online writing.

Many things that were once considered luxuries have become necessities in today's rapidly evolving world. In the same vein, having a social media account, whether it be on Facebook, Twitter, or another platform, is now increasingly necessary for anyone who wants to stay up to date on the latest news and stay in touch with family members, close friends, and even coworkers and colleagues. With over 2.5 billion monthly active users, Facebook is undoubtedly ingratiating itself and growing to play a significant role in our daily lives (Noyes, 2020). The rapid uptake of mobile messaging services like Facebook affects the linguistic characteristics typical of this type of computer-mediated discourse (CMD) (Al-Smadi, 2017). Millions of users have used the mobile instant messaging app Facebook since it launched in 2009 to send messages, share photos, and make calls (Acton & Koum, 2014). Austin (1962) found that there are communicative



acts such as sharing and collecting information asking questions and expressing emotions all fall into the realm of "speech acts."

According to research, any communication sent via phone, email, or instant message contributes to the overall discourse on the subject. The word "discourse" refers to the fundamental concept of how language is organized in various spheres of life, such as social discourse or political discourse. A speech act that consists of locution (i.e., the actual meaningful linguistic expression and its apparent meaning), illocution (i.e., the intended meaning of the given utterance), and perlocution (i.e., the actual effect of that given utterance upon feelings, beliefs, or actions, such as persuading, or inspiring) can effectively convey the message contained in a text from a pragmatic standpoint (Austin, 1962).

Facebook provides a lot of data for investigating communications interesting events, cultures, and themes. Microblogging is one of Facebook's most popular features (Büchel & Berger 2012). This feature allows Facebook users to share text-based messages (such as statuses) about their thoughts, feelings, and activities with other Facebook users. Many researchers believe that Facebook Status allows you to communicate your thoughts and feelings and share the activities that matter to you (Howlader, Pal, Cuzzocrea, & Kumar 2018). These statuses include different types of speech acts that tend to be more spontaneous and less shared and organized (Ling, Baron, Lenhart, & Campbell 2014). Similarly, Wilson, Gosling and Graham (2012) argue that Facebook is a remarkable opportunity for social scientists to observe different human behaviors and social phenomena in the natural environment. This has also been confirmed by Buffardi and Campbell (2008). Studying Facebook is theoretically like studying culture over time. Research shows Facebook users express their beliefs, values, and interests in their online profiles. These beliefs and practices actually might reflect people's offline culture.

Aljaad and Hamad (2017) assert this reality, saying that information and communication technology has emerged as one of the most rapidly expanding industries in recent years. According to Al Ashmawy (2011), people are currently living in an era of information and technological revolution since computers and the internet have permeated everyday life. Additionally, the way people live in the modern world has been impacted by information and communication technology and the capabilities it offers. Therefore, it makes sense to characterize this period as one in which various



communication tools have become an essential part of our daily life. In this regard, Husni (2013) emphasizes that the development of smartphones has brought about an information revolution in the way that social media is utilized because people no longer need to own a PC or a laptop to access the internet and be linked to it. A fundamental pillar in how people behave in their daily lives, this technology has permeated every aspect of human life as the new generation has grown up with it. Facebook nowadays is considered one of the new applications made possible by the development of smartphones that have had a big impact on people's lives, particularly in the Arab World. Facebook changed communication, which sparked a conflict with more established channels of communication.

Due to the significance of online platforms in showing people's orientations, feelings, and ways of thinking, the present study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What are the functions of Facebook statuses used by Jordanians?**
- 2- What types of speech acts of Facebook statuses are used by Jordanians?**

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review provides an overview of the relevant literature covering the scope and research question of the study. We also clarify the theory of speech acts. The latest relevant references and sources are indicated in this section.

This study used Searle's speech act theory. Searle (1969) classifies speech acts into five types. They are declarative, expressive, directive, conforming, and assertive. A declaration is an act of speech that changes the world; their utterances (blessing, proclamation, arrest, naming, marriage, rejection, etc.). Representation is a speech act that states what the speaker believes to be true or not (statements, claims, conclusions, explanations, allegations, reports, hypotheses). Expression words are verbal acts that express what the speaker feels (joy, pain, like, dislike, joy, sadness, greeting, apology, congratulations, condolences, gratitude, wishes, complaints, compliments, farewell, admiration, irony, ridicule, ...). A command is a speech act that a speaker uses to make someone do something (command, command, request, suggestion, question, advice, permission, concession, warning, offer, complaints, threats, impulses, challenges,



demands, ...). Commissive is a speech act that a speaker uses to commit to future action (promise, oath, threat, refusal, acceptance, offer, etc.).

This section discusses some empirical studies to help the reader understand previous relevant studies. It also aims to understand where this research originated and to indicate gaps in existing research. In a sample of Saudi university students, Aljasir, Bajnaid, Elyas, and Alnawasrah (2017) looked into the primary themes reflected in Facebook statuses and their semantic meanings. 50 male university students made up the study's sample. Thematic analysis was employed during data collection. The study's findings revealed that communicating with family and close friends, sending messages to specific individuals, starting a discussion about a particular subject, and revealing the user's inner state were the most prevalent themes in students' Facebook status updates. Further, Deters and Mehl (2013) looked at how Facebook status updates affected people's feelings of isolation. The study's sample consisted of 86 people of various ages and backgrounds. Their Facebook status was quantitatively analyzed to gather data. The study's findings suggested that a user's Facebook status reflects their emotions. Age and socioeconomic status had no statistically significant effects on the semantic meanings of the Facebook status. Not only to express yourself but also to identify your identity. Nartey (2013) also investigated status updates from the University of the Cape Coast. He sought to understand the different categories of speech acts used by a Ghanaian college student to update her status on her Facebook and the practical rationale for these status updates. Results show that the students used five speech acts: pointing, asserting, expressing, comic, and quoting. Content analysis showed that pointing was the most common speech act (35%), followed by assertion (23.3%), expression (21.7%), quoting (11.7%), and comics (8.3%).

Also, Hamdan (2021) looked at the practical uses of Facebook's "like" button when users interact with status updates. To gather the data, the researcher asked a friend who also happened to be a university professor to post a request on his Facebook page asking his friends, colleagues, and students to comment on when they typically hit the like button on status and why. There have been 218 comments gathered in total. Analysis of the data demonstrates that, contrary to Facebook's original intent, the like button is not exclusively used to express appreciation in the Jordanian context. The results also showed that the use of the "like" button has evolved into a graphic pragmatic marker with eight functions and illocutions, ranging in purpose from expressing unqualified admiration and



approval of published content to expressing mockery of it. Previous studies investigated Facebook updates for specific groups of people such as college students. Expanding the sample pool could give a general idea about people of specific cultures, especially when they differ in age and thinking orientation. To this end, this study used a convenience sampling approach to investigate the Jordanian people's pinned Facebook status. Results might give us a holistic sociological picture of the Jordanian community.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 RATIONAL OF THE RESEARCH

The goal of the paper is to take us one step closer to understanding how Jordanians communicate their ideas, beliefs, and customs. It offers a distinctive perspective on what the language of the Jordanian community in the networked society is like and what its influences are. By taking into account their quirks and adjusting the features used to their structure and content, the study contributes to knowledge by normalizing and generalizing the language used to express Facebook users' status.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

430 Facebook profiles were chosen randomly to find out the ideas that they expressed as pinned Facebook statuses. The samples are all male Facebook users and randomly chosen to get a holistic idea about the ideas the Jordanian people support in their daily lives.

The study used a qualitative method design in which researchers collected a series of pinned Facebook statuses. Content analysis is used in which the pinned Facebook statuses were gathered from 430 randomly chosen Jordanian Facebook profiles. The pinned Facebook statuses were then grouped and translated into English and categorized based on speech acts categorizations. The data collected reached saturation after 430 statuses, that is, no new themes emerged after that.

4 RESULTS

The current study sought to achieve two main research objectives as follows:

3- What are the functions of pinned Facebook statuses used by Jordanians?



Table 1. The functions of Facebook statuses used by Jordanians

Status/function	Frequency	percentage
Religious	180	41%
Sayings	100	23%
Personal	70	16%
Family	50	11%
Miscellaneous	30	6%
Total	430	100%

Source: Hamdan (2021)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357406788_The_Pragmatic_Functions_of_Facebook_Likes_on_Status_Updates_Evidence_from_User_Perceptions

4.1 RELIGIOUS

Table 1 above illustrates that religious discourse is the most frequent function used by Jordanians as Facebook pinned statuses. This type is the most prevalent category, 180 (41%) of the used texts fall into the religious category. These posts come from the Holy Quran and Prophetic sayings as follows:

- "And whoever fears Allah will provide him with a way out; (Surat Altalaq, verse 2)
- Prophetic sayings, such as "You are only as good as those with whom you associate";
- and supplications, such as "Oh Allah! I enlist your assistance and rely on you for all of my needs.
- I also pray to God, saying, "There is no god but Allah," and I send prayers to his prophet Mohammad, his family, and his companions.
- And say Oh my Lord, increase my knowledge (Surat Taha, verse 114)

The users' propensity to use this feature to send religious messages to their audience can be attributed to the frequency with which these items are used. Users appear to prefer to share religious information with their contacts. They might try to remind them of their religious obligations; invite them to participate in what they are doing; repeat their religious sayings or verses so that Allah will reward them; or convey to their contacts the impression that they are more closely associated with religion. The results here are in line with the results of Taha Assaggaf (2019) who found that religious discourse is the most prevalent one used by Yemeni WhatsApp users. Also, the results are consistent with BaniKalef's (2019) findings which showed that Islam is the most frequent orientation used by Jordanian University students in their Facebook status updates.



4.2 SAYINGS

The second frequent function used by the participants is saying or expressing wisdom. This theme constitutes 100 frequencies 23% of the collected statuses. These sayings are mostly expressions that offer advice or wisdom. These could give us how these people think. These sayings include motivating the self, not submitting to others, and pride in the self. Also, this includes poetry verses for famous poets. Some examples are given below:

- Justice is the basis of the rule
- Hey horseman, kill the horses since there are no knights left to use them
- All your injuries will be healed with the mercy of Allah
- Do not make your clothes more valuable than yourself
- Personal

The third major category that could be classified in the sample data is personal. This represents 70 frequencies 16% of the total sample. Data showed that users intended to mention their work types or the services they offer as an advertising strategy. This could help them expand the audience of those in need of these services.

Examples of this type include:

- Work nature: Engineer, web designer, translator, etc.
- Academic rank: Dr. assistant professor, professor
- Personality description
- Pride in the tribe

4.4 FAMILY

In Jordanian society, the family gains high priority in terms of care and appreciation, especially the father and mother. Based on the elicited data, this theme constitutes a high percentage in the expressions of people studied; 50 frequencies (11%). These expressions include showing love toward alive or deceased parents. Showing pride in fathers and brothers mostly and love to mothers. Some examples are illustrated below:

- Pride in the family especially parents and brothers Such as: My Allah save my parents to me
- Supplication for the deceased parents of other parts of the family such as My all forgive my deceased mother's soul



- The other care that family remembers shows is the care for their children. That is, they write the names of their sons on their pinned statuses such as (Abu Ahmad) Abu means the father of Ahmad. This title is used also in Jordanian society as a polite way to interact with others.

4.5 MISCELLANEOUS

The elicited data showed that other themes emerged; 30 frequencies (6%). These include alerts that have a variety of functions as explained in the following examples:

- Don't be sad, what's coming would be better
- Challenging words often lead to beautiful destinations
- After every breath, new life is given
- Be good, do good, and have fun
- I'm being envied as if I own the whole world.
- Stay away from negative people; they have a problem for every solution.

4- What types of speech acts of Facebook statuses do Jordanians use?

As for the speech act used type, most of the statuses fall under the assertive speech acts. Assertive (or representatives): Illocutionary acts that represent a state of affairs such as stating, claiming, hypothesizing, describing, telling, insisting, suggesting, asserting, or swearing. This speech act represents a state of fact and it would be appropriate for identity construction and maintenance because it attempts to influence the receiver to adopt a belief. It conveys the sender's opinion about a matter that can be judged to be true or false. The speakers in this study asserted their belief in Islam by posting verses from the Holy Quran and the Prophet Mohammad's hadiths (sayings).

The second speech act is expressive; an expressive speech act is a speech act in which the speaker expresses feelings and attitudes about something. The speakers express their feelings toward their parents and family members. These feelings include the pride in the parents and brothers and the pride in the tribe the speakers belong to. In addition to that, showing love to the children by writing their names after the speaker's names.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study discovered that Facebook language is heavily utilized and correlated to produce a valid and reliable measure of its users' status and personality. The data analysis sheds some light on more fundamental sociocultural facets of Jordanian



society. This qualitative study investigated the functions of Jordanians' Facebook pinned statuses. The study has gathered and examined 470 statuses for this reason. The findings revealed that there were six main functions for the statuses used by Jordanians. These functions are religious, sayings, personal, family, and miscellaneous respectively. Additionally, the data gathered fell under two main speech acts which are assertive (89%) and expressive (11%). It would be beneficial to look into these aspects of the Jordanian socio-cultural context to give a descriptive account of the influence of society on language as well as how specific concepts like power (i.e., domination and authority) technically operate and are expressed in the language used. Van Dijk (1998) argues that there is a need to look carefully at the discursive manifestations of the social media posts which gives us more knowledge about the users' way of thinking.

This is so because what people post on Facebook is, in some way, influenced by their beliefs and how they see the world. To determine whether different age groups use language differently on these online social networking sites, particularly status notifications, a study should be done. A quantitative study is required to gather data from various communities regarding language variation usage in light of age, education, profession, and reason for communicating. Future research is required to investigate the functions of posts on other social media. This study concentrated particularly on a limited number of profiles, future research could be broadened to include a wider demographic base, both geographically and internationally so that the results could be generalized. However, although this study focuses only on male Facebook users, it might be a good effort, which could pave the way for researchers to understand the psychology of Jordanian society.



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