

The Effect of Gender on Facebook Status Updates in Jordan

By

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of gender in the choice of proper speech acts related to Facebook status updates by some Jordanian users. The paper firstly classifies the dataset (200 Facebook status updates) into categories according to their communicative functions before classifying them according to Searle's (1969) speech act taxonomy. The study finds religious status updates are the most frequently used among both males and females. However, the two genders differ regarding other updates. For instance, gratitude is the least frequent category used among males whereas sports category is the least frequently used among female users. Concerning the classification of status updates according to Searle's speech act taxonomy, the study finds that expressives are the most frequent speech acts among both males and females. Meanwhile, commissives are the least frequent among also both males and females. The paper unveiled, in addition to Searle's five, three additional categories specific to the Jordanian situation, namely, invocations, humour, and quotations.

Key Words: Speech acts, Status updates, Facebook, Categories, Jordan1. Introduction

The paper investigates the role of gender in Facebook status updates by some Jordanian users. Facebook, one of the most popular websites on social media platforms all over the world, allows users to share their thoughts and feelings with other users. In this vein, Derks et al. (2012) argue that many social media platforms encourage emotional self-expression, inviting users to regularly update their thoughts, feelings, and experiences to their larger network. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube, according to Creswell (2014), are considered audiovisual sources of data that can be used in analyses in qualitative and quantitative research. Social media has developed and grown in the last decade to a point where it is now regarded as ubiquitous, i.e., seems to be in all places, and used by millions of people.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classify Facebook and Twitter as blogs, micro-blogs, and social networking sites and classify Youtube as content communities' sites. Social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube give researchers access to a great variety of participants and data. This allows researchers to collect data that are relevant to their studies. Then, they can analyze and discuss the behaviors and attitudes of participants towards personal data sharing on those sites. Also, researchers can analyze the social variables of participants such as gender and age.

Oh (2010) argues that users of social media utilize it to make friends with others and to build social relationships, connections, and communities. They also use it to create, publish, or distribute information in the form of texts, videos, texts, audios, or tweets. People also ask one another and share bookmarks, slides, presentations, and other files. Moreover, they provide feedback on or rate others' information. Surowiecki (2004), cited by Oh (2010), argues that people on social media seek and share ideas, information, expertise, experiences, emotions, and opinions with both acquaintances and strangers. This makes social media richer in data to be observed and analyzed. Therefore, researchers can extract and analyze the relevant wealth of data in their research that is available on social media platforms. Computer-mediated communication (henceforth CMC) has a great influence on our daily life communications. Yu (2011, p. 531) indicates that CMC is "any communicative transaction that occurs through the use of two or more networked computers". Moreover, it "encompasses any human interaction via Smartphone applications" (Shkour, 2019, p. 18). Crystal (2001) rings the alarm that CMC is considered as a new form of language that is full of linguistic properties and functions of both spoken and written languages. Thus, social websites and varied applications of communication technologies have become an ideal medium for online social interaction.

Recently, the appearance of Facebook, for example, among social interaction means is considered as a part of social networking sites around the world. Millions of people join Facebook to socialize with friends (Ilyas and Khushi, 2012). Yet, "the availability of more than 70 languages on Facebook indicates its popularity" (Wong 2012, p. 184). That is why Facebook can give a chance for its users to stay connected with their friends, to share and express what matters to them, and to discover what is going on in the world. For this, it is a social platform composed of strong ties between individuals. A sizable portion of Facebook in Jordan constitutes the most widely used online social network (The Jordan Times, 2016; Alzougool, 2018). Therefore, Facebook is considered a great website to check in to see what important things Jordanians are doing and thoughts are thinking. It also provides the opportunity for Jordanians to think about what they prefer to show others. It has become saturated with all forms of speech acts. In other words, while using Facebook, people are using a wide range of linguistic choices and functions. What this means, Facebook users tend to express themselves via posts, comments, videos, pictures, status updates, etc.

As one of Facebook's features is status updates, people can put up (e.g., posts, photos, videos, etc.) emphasizing aspects of their self-presentation and conveying the best images of them to maintain a good impression. Meanwhile, "status updates are short texts that can include pictures, links, videos, and typically appear on Facebook news feeds, allowing friends to "like" or "comment" below the status update" (Kramer, 2014, p. 195). Moreover, they may "reflect users' views and feelings, or allow them to share the activities they care about with each other every time" (Banikalef and Bataineh, 2017, p. 265). In this sense, a Facebook status update is generally designed to be short, giving some information without going into details. Furthermore, it allows users to receive information about what their friends are doing, reading, watching, or thinking, and provides opportunities for friends to comment and interact based on what is shared. Through status updates, people achieve a variety of functions and convey explicit and implicit messages.

What is worth noting here is that "status updates enable effortless and fast one-to-many communication" (Deters and Mehl, 2012, p. 580). What this means is that status can be intended to a large known audience (i.e., anyone of his/her friends on Facebook). Thus, the popularity of status updates makes it a topic worth being studied empirically. Therefore, in

the current paper, the 'medium' that will be explored is the Facebook status updates as an "immediate announcement on News Feed" (Wong 2012, p. 184). It can be a post with texts, photos, or videos, personal notes are written and shared and inbox messages sent to others. Meanwhile, the research sheds light on the communicative functions that emerge from the analysis of the status updates. Therefore, it aims to examine the effect of gender on Facebook users' statuses in Jordan using Searle's classification of speech acts (1969). Moreover, the current study attempts to identify the most common Facebook update status' speech acts among Jordanian Facebook users.

2. Speech Act Theory

Pragmatics is a bough of linguistics that is concerned with meaning. Therefore, there are five principles of pragmatics which are deixis, presupposition, entailment, implicature, and speech act (Wulandari, 2014). As a subfield of pragmatics, speech act theory is concerned with "the ways in which words can be used not only to present information but also to carry out actions" (Shkour, 2019, p. 6). In other words, when people speak, they use language to achieve a variety of functions like expressing different emotions and thoughts. For this, speech acts have into consideration three things such as the usage of language, the speaker's intention, and the interaction in a social context (Ilyas and Khushi, 2012).

Historically, Austin (1962) is probably the first that ingrained the seed of speech acts theory in his work *'How to Do Things with Language'*. Accordingly, Austin (1962) distinguished between two types of utterances: *constatives* and *performatives*. Later, Austin moved away from the constative/performative distinction and proposed that speech acts be divided into three different levels of acts that issuing an utterance: the locutionary act, the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act. To our discussion in a concrete shoe, Austin (1962, p. 94) introduced the locutionary act as "the act of 'saying something'". The illocutionary act is the act "which conveys force" (Hair 1976: 1), viz, it means "as an order" (Austin 1962, p. 100). Moreover, he defined perlocutionary act as the "performance of an act" (Austin 1962: 101). After that, he suggested taxonomy for utterance in terms of illocutionary acts which are namely: *verdictives*, *exercitives*, *commissives*, *behabitives* and *expositives* (see Austin 1962, pp. 150-151).

In his influential article *'What is a Speech Act?'*, Searle (1969) tried to update and develop Austin's speech act theory. Searle assumed and claimed that Austin's proposed theory of speech acts suffered from some shortcomings as "the persistent confusion between illocutionary acts and illocutionary verbs, as well as overlapping of the categories of illocutionaries" (Kroupa 2017, p. 18). Moreover, Searle believed that Austin's classification of illocutionary acts lacks "clearly provided principles for describing each individual class" (Kroupa 2017, p. 18). Therefore, Searle's speech acts theory is considered as a theory of constitutive rules for performing illocutionary acts. Thus, Searle's work (1976) *'A classification of illocutionary acts'* suggested an alternative taxonomy for illocutionary acts:

- *Representatives* or (assertives) in which the speaker asserts a specific idea, proposition or belief to be true using such verbs as *claim*, *affirm*, *boast*, *believe*, *conclude*, *deny*, *predict*, *report*, etc.
- Directives are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something using such verbs as *request*, *command*, *suggest*, *order*, *invite*, *insist*, etc.
- Expressives are the speech acts state in what the speaker feels or expresses his/her attitude to some psychological state by using such verbs as *apologize*, *appreciate*,

congratulate, regret, thank, welcome, etc. Besides, statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy or sorrow can be considered expressive speech acts.

- Commissives are the illocutionary acts in which the speakers commit themselves to future actions by using verbs including *guarantee, offer, promise, swear, undertake*, etc.
- Declarations acts are statements or expressions that change the world by their utterance. In other words, those utterances in which the speaker declares something done using some kinds of verbs such *resign, pronounce, name, promote*, etc. (For details, see Searle, 1976, p. 10-14).

3. Related Studies

One of the most relevant studies to the present one is Banikalef (2019) who investigates the impact of culture and gender on the use of speech acts in Facebook Status Updates (FSUs). The study involves 100 college undergraduate students (50 females and 50 males) from three universities in north Jordan. A total of 1718 FSUs were collected over a period of two months. The findings reveal that females made an average of 6 updates to their Facebook status, while males averaged four. Besides, the results reveal that the most common speech act used by the male participants was assertive whereas the most frequent speech act among the female participants was expressive. Moreover, females use FSUs to enhance social connections and relationships while males use them to boost social dominance. Islam and tribalism are factors that are found to play an important role in defining the cultural norms of the Jordanian speech community.

Khalaf (2018) investigates the communicative functions of Facebook posts and status updates. The data comprises males and females aged between 21-35 years. Ten statuses and posts with several comments were randomly chosen and categorized according to their semantic domain. The researcher analyzed the data through Searle's (1969) taxonomy, together with Grice's (1975) theory of cooperative maxims and implicature. According to Searle's framework, the data showed that the assertives were the most frequent type used in Facebook posts and status updates. The findings also reveal that people tend to use indirect speech acts more often than using direct ones. Moreover, the functions of digital discourse that appeared and derived from the data were: preaching, prayers, supplications, spreading consciousness among people, greeting, revealing constructed online identities, and addressing the target audience. Furthermore, it was noticed that the form of the posts, mingling verbal and pictorial elements, was the most dominant and explicit formal digital discourse feature. That is why most posts contained pictures and emojis that accompanied the written words to convey the meaning wished to be conveyed.

Wu (2018) investigates linguistic and nonlinguistic components in Facebook status updates among Malaysian youths. Data were chosen from public Facebook status updates. The collected status updates were analyzed through Appel and Muysken's (2006), as well as Dresner and Herring's (2010), works as analytical frameworks. The findings reveal that the use of code-switching, code-mixing, and emoticons are the most prevalent linguistic and non-linguistic features used by the Malaysian youths in Facebook status updates. Furthermore, the researcher found out that code-switching and code-mixing were frequently used by Malaysian youths in their Facebook status updates. In this sense, code-switching mainly achieved expressive and directive functions. In other words, the Malaysian youths used code-switching and code-mixing in order to fulfill semantic meaning or cultural identity in the

expressions. Meanwhile the emoticons were functionally used as facial expressions, emotions/feelings indicators, and illocutionary force indicators.

Banikalef and Bataineh (2017) investigate the types of speech acts in the status updates posted by young Jordanian Facebook users (namely students from Irbid National University and Jadara University). The sample of the study was 200 participants. The data were collected and analyzed in terms of Searle's taxonomy. The results show that the participants applied six types of speech acts in their status updates on Facebook: "expressive, assertive, directives, God's invocation, quotation and humor" (Banikalef and Bataineh, 2017: 246). Moreover, the findings reveal that cultural and religious backgrounds were profoundly influential in all participants' responses, a state of affairs that has impacted their linguistic diversity.

Aljasir et al. (2017) investigate themes of Facebook status updates and levels of online disclosure generated by Saudi university students. The researchers conducted thematic and quantitative content analyses of profiles of a sample that included fifty students. A total of 7.928 status updates were analyzed for eleven months. Status updates were classified according to five categories depending on the kind of media they contained: "text only, text and photo, text and a video, text and a URL link, or a photo only" (p.81). The results of the inductive bottom-up thematic content analysis showed that Saudi university students generated a wide range of status updates that can be classified into 16 themes. In terms of classifying the themes of status updates, the findings revealed that the students' statuses, for example, about religious issues, advice, hobbies, and congratulations offered deep insights into Saudi society. Moreover, the results show that Saudi university students tend to disclose more personal information compared with those in Canada and South Africa.

Daud and Mclellan (2016) investigate gender and code choice in Bruneian Facebook status updates. In other words, the researchers investigate the correlations between gender and code choice, the use of emotive language and emoticons, and non-standardized orthographic forms. For this, their study examines the language used by Bruneians on Facebook in terms of relational maintenance strategies. A sample consisting of 240 Facebook status update employed by undergraduates of University Brunei Darussalam were examined. After analyzing the data, the findings show that undergraduate students used varied categories of maintenance strategies to maintain relationships with other users through Facebook status updates. Moreover, gender influences the existence and frequency of several linguistic variables in such updates. In this sense, females are code-switched more than males, whereas males use a single code more than females. Furthermore, females use emotive language and emoticons on Facebook more than males do, whilst males use non-standardized orthographic forms more than females do.

Dawaghreh (2016) investigates the Facebook language in terms of content and form as used by Jordanian university students from a sociolinguistic perspective. Also, the study examines the effect of sex and religion in the participants' writings and interactions on Facebook. The findings revealed that were some linguistic features and functions were used in the Facebook language. Otherwise, it was noticed that the language of Facebook was governed by sociological factors such as sex and religion. For example, abbreviations, shortenings, Latinized Arabic, and code-switching were used to save time and effort. Moreover, it was noticed that the messages were colored with a religious background. Besides, the participants resorted to a code-switching strategy due to certain motivations as simplicity and rapidity in writing. In terms of sex, females tended to be more abiding by social norms than males.

Catania-Opris (2016) investigates the causes of individuals using Facebook status updates to cope after the loss of a loved one. In other words, the researcher aims to demonstrate the various rituals clients used to cope when grieving and to add significant information about the grieving process. For this, seven participants were interviewed using digital voice recordings to gain a greater understanding of the impact of Facebook status updates as a contemporary death ritual. *Social Grief* theory was discovered that participants received support, validation, and closure by using Facebook status updates to grieve. Yet, five categories emerged within the theory of *Social Grief*. Those categories were: *Memorialization* which indicated that participants used Facebook status updates to share stories of the deceased as a way to honor the memories of their loved ones. *Validation* was characterized by receiving acknowledgment and positive reinforcement from other Facebook members via status updates. *The megaphone* was defined as the desire to reach the masses on Facebook and discuss present emotions using status updates. *Milestones* were referred to how the bereaved used Facebook status updates to share *accomplishments* and *holidays* with the deceased. Finally, *Methods of Coping* was characterized by support, connection, and closure. Meanwhile, participants felt supported and comforted by receiving positive responses and helpful suggestions from other Facebook members.

Other scholars who deal with topics related to status updates include Al-Momani (2022), Edghimat (2022), Bazarova et al. (2015), Varghese (2014), Wulandari (2014), Nartey (2013), Deters and Mehl (2012), Ilyas and Khushi (2012), and Kramer and Chung (2011).

4. Method And Procedures

As of June 2017, there were about 4.8 million Facebook subscribers in Jordan with a penetration rate of 60.9% (Internet World Status, 2017). Thus, the population of the current study encompasses nearly all Jordanian Facebook users.

The sample of the study includes 200 Jordanian male (n= 73) and female (n=127) Facebook users from different regions in Jordan. Some are relatives and close friends of the researchers, whereas others are friends of either researcher's colleagues. Thus, from these users' accounts, 200 status updates copied as screenshots were collected after obtaining the participants' approval. However, the identity of the users is not revealed in the paper for the sake of privacy.

The status updates were analyzed and sorted in terms of their semantic domains. Upon categorizing the collected status updates, they were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. As for the quantitative analysis, the statuses are computed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. In addition, various tools were used: 1) descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages to display sample profile, usage of status categories, and taxonomies of speech acts. 2) Bar charts, Cluster graphs, and population pyramids to visualize the frequencies for status categories and taxonomies use.

The qualitative methods were used to identify the communicative functions of Facebook status updates and consequently to interpret them.

The researchers firstly classified the dataset (200 Facebook status updates) into categories according to their communicative functions before classifying them according to Searle's speech acts taxonomy. According to their communicative functions and similarities in content, the researchers came up with 11 categories (see Table 2) in section 5 below. This

classification helped to reduce the overall number of data units and made the examination and the comparison of the data easier. However, the researchers excluded statuses that have political, very personal, and taboo topics. Also, for the status updates that might have more than one speech act, the researcher either excluded or considered the main speech act so as not to cause any confusion. Then, the collected status updates were analyzed according to Searle's (1969) speech acts taxonomy. The aim was to use Searle's original speech act definitions and taxonomy as the basis for the current study to the greatest extent possible. This means that each collected status update is assigned to a suitable category and categorized according to Searle's (1969) speech act taxonomy (e.g., assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives). However, there were three new speech act taxonomies identified in the collected data outside the coding scheme; that means new categories were arranged for them. Therefore, three new speech acts were added to Searle's taxonomy, namely: divine invocations, humor, and quotations. Thus, the new classification included 8 speech acts (see table 3 below).

5. Findings

Due to their importance in the following analysis, age and gender of participants are displayed in Table (1) using descriptive statistics. More than half were female (N = 127, 63.5%), whereas male Facebook users accounted for (N = 73, 36.5%) of the sample. Regarding the age of users, (N = 132, 66%) reported their age to be 18 – 35 years, and (N = 68, 34%) of users reported their age to be 36 years or more. So, about two-thirds of the participants could be categorized within the young age group, which is quite normal, because most active Facebook users in Jordan are actually young.

Table 1: *Sample profile (N = 200)*

Category	Sub-Group	N	%
Gender	Male	73	36.5%
	Female	127	63.5%
	Total	200	100%
Age	18 – 35 years	132	66%
	36 years or more	68	34%
	Total	200	100%

Since the study is primarily concerned with exploring the most frequent types of speech act taxonomies in Facebook status updates used by Jordanian Facebook users, statuses were categorized according to their communicative functions into 11 categories, whereas taxonomies of speech acts were categorized into 8 categories. Table (2) provides status categories according to their communicative functions and Table (3) provides taxonomies classification used in the current study.

Table 2: *Statuses categories*

Code	Category
1	Religious
2	Greetings
3	Congratulations and celebrations
4	Condolences
5	Invitation
6	Gratitude
7	Funny and comical
8	Ironic
9	Dictums
10	Sports
11	Others

Table 3: *Taxonomies classification*

Code	Category
1	Assertives
2	Commissives
3	Directives
4	Declaratives
5	Expressives
6	Divine invocations
7	Quotations
8	Humour

Frequencies and percentages of the status updates according to their communicative functions are displayed in Table (4) below. Figure (2) depicts a Cluster graph for frequencies of statuses categories – according to gender, whereas Figure (3) depicts a population pyramid graph for frequencies of status categories – according to gender. Results are as follows in descending order:

- **Male users:** Religious (F = 13 → 17.8%), Greetings (F = 13 → 17.8%), Sports (F = 11 → 15.1%), Ironic (F = 8 → 11%), Condolences (F = 7 → 9.6%), Others (F = 7 → 9.6%), Funny and comical (F = 6 → 8.2%), Dictums (F = 4 → 5.5%), Invitation (F = 2 → 2.7%), Congratulations and celebrations (F = 1 → 1.4%), Gratitude (F = 1 → 1.4%).
- **Female users:** Religious (F = 36 → 28.3%), Greetings (F = 35 → 27.6%), Dictums (F = 15 → 11.8%), Others (F = 13 → 10.2%), Condolences (F = 11 → 8.7%), Funny and comical (F = 6, 4.7%), Congratulations and celebrations (F = 4 → 3.1%), Ironic (F = 4 → 3.1%), Gratitude (F = 2 → 1.6%), Invitation (F = 1 → 0.8%). Sports statuses were not used by Female users.

Table 4: *Frequencies and percentages of communicative functions of status updates*

Code	Category	Total sample (N = 200)		Male (N = 73)		Female (N = 127)	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Religious	13	6.5%	13	17.8%	36	28.3%
2	Greetings	13	6.5%	13	17.8%	35	27.6%
3	Congratulations and celebrations	1	0.5%	1	1.4%	4	3.1%
4	Condolences	7	3.5%	7	9.6%	11	8.7%
5	Invitation	2	1.0%	2	2.7%	1	0.8%
6	Gratitude	1	0.5%	1	1.4%	2	1.6%
7	Funny and comical	6	3.0%	6	8.2%	6	4.7%
8	Ironic	8	4.0%	8	11.0%	4	3.1%
9	Dictums	4	2.0%	4	5.5%	15	11.8%
10	Sports	11	5.5%	11	15.1%	--	--
11	Others	7	3.5%	7	9.6%	13	10.2%
	Total			73	100%	127	100%

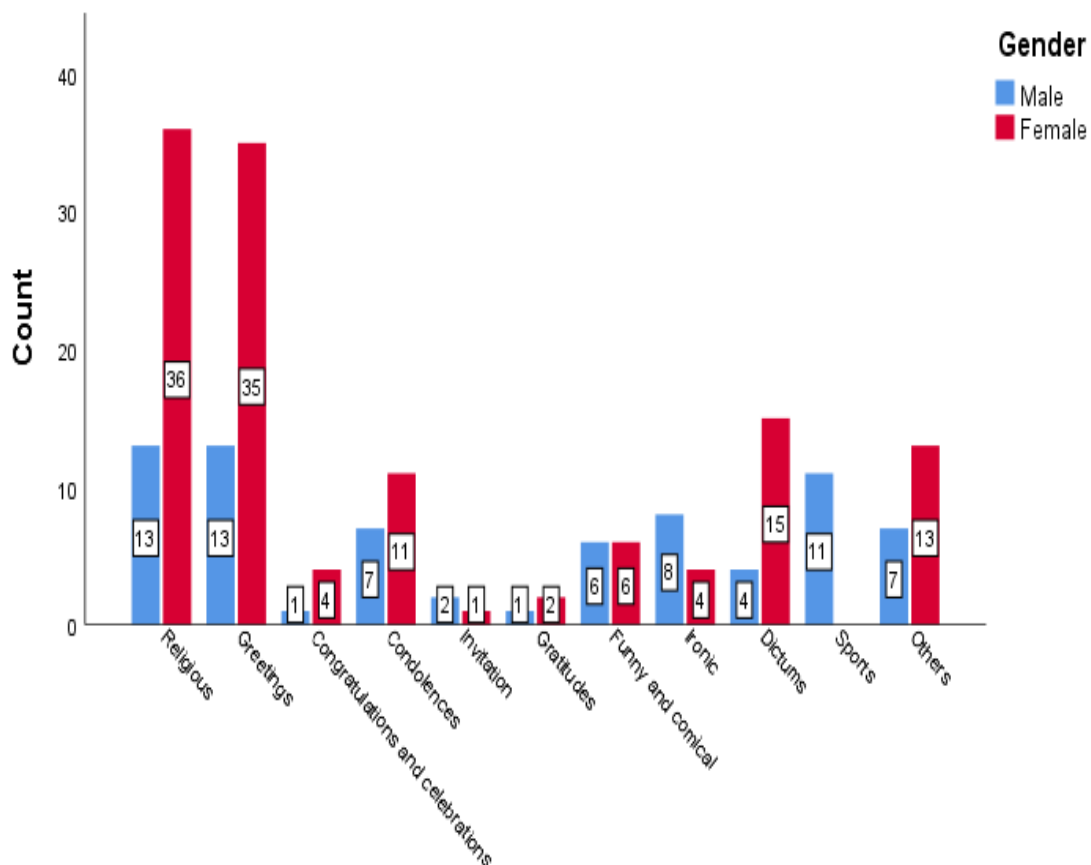


Figure 1: *Cluster graph for frequencies of Statuses categories – according to gender*

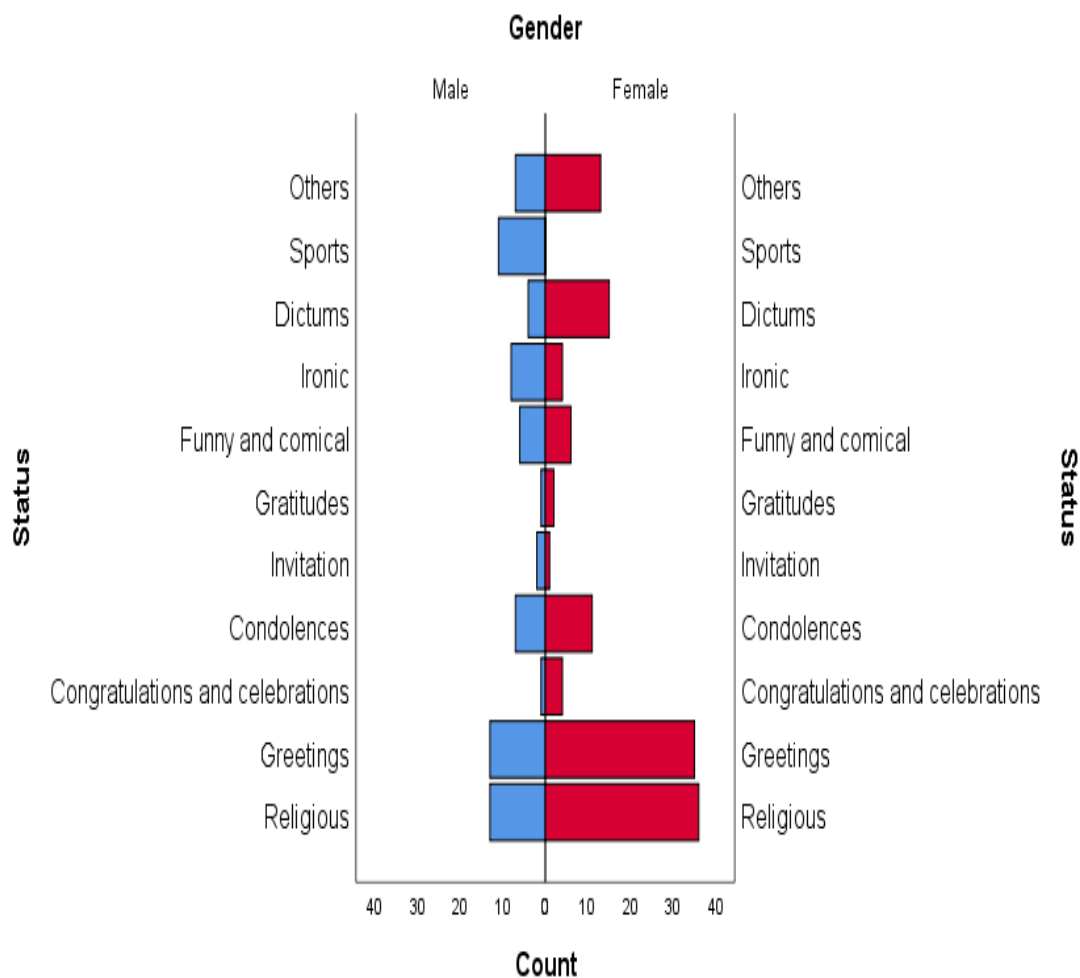


Figure 2: Population pyramid graph for frequencies of Statuses categories – according to gender

Frequencies and percentages of taxonomies categories used according to gender are displayed in Table (5). Figure (4) depicts a Cluster graph for frequencies of taxonomies categories – according to gender, whereas Figure (5) depicts a Population pyramid graph for frequencies of taxonomies categories – according to gender. Results were as follows in descending order:

- **Male users:** Expressives (F = 28 → 38.4%), Speech acts of Humours (F = 15 → 20.5%), Speech act of quotations (F = 12 → 16.4%), Declaratives (F = 5 → 6.8%), Assertives (F = 4 → 5.5%), God's invocations (F = 4 → 5.5%), Directives (F = 3 → 4.1%), Commissives (F = 2 → 2.7%).
- **Female users:** Expressives (F = 54 → 42.5%), Speech act of quotations (F = 34 → 26.8%), Speech acts of Humours (F = 10 → 7.9%), Assertives (F = 9 → 7.1%), Declaratives (F = 7 → 5.5%), God's invocations (F = 7 → 5.5%), Directives (F = 5 → 3.9%), Commissives (F = 1 → 0.8%).

Table 5: Frequencies and percentages of taxonomies categories – according to gender (N = 200)

Total sample (N = 200)		Male (N = 73)		Female (N = 127)	
Code	Category	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Assertives	4	5.5%	9	7.1%
2	Commissives	2	2.7%	1	0.8%
3	Directives	3	4.1%	5	3.9%
4	Declaratives	5	6.8%	7	5.5%
5	Expressives	28	38.4%	54	42.5%
6	God's invocations	4	5.5%	7	5.5%
7	Speech act of quotations	12	16.4%	34	26.8%
8	Speech acts of Humours	15	20.5%	10	7.9%
	Total	73	100%	127	100%

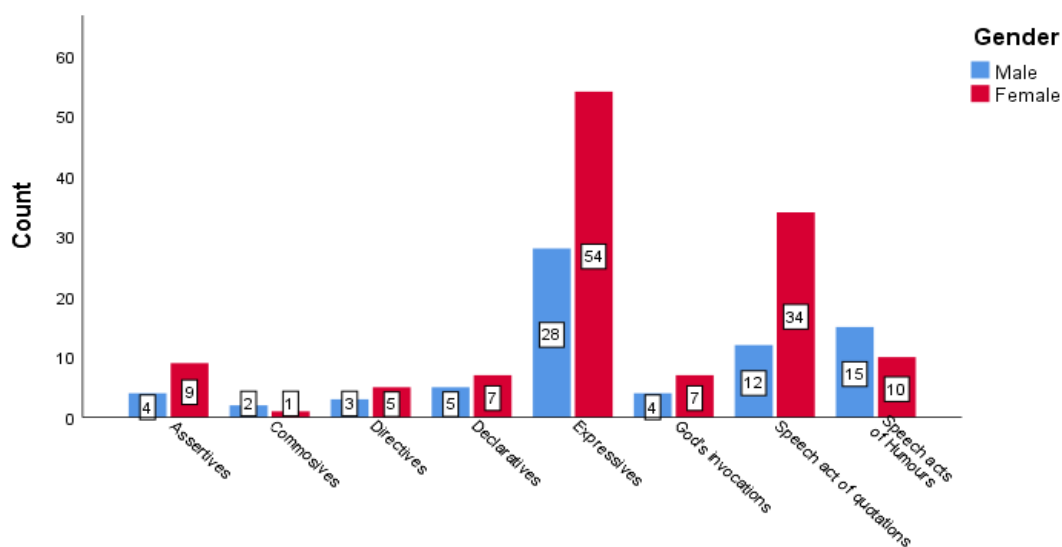


Figure 4: Cluster graph for frequencies of taxonomies categories – according to gender

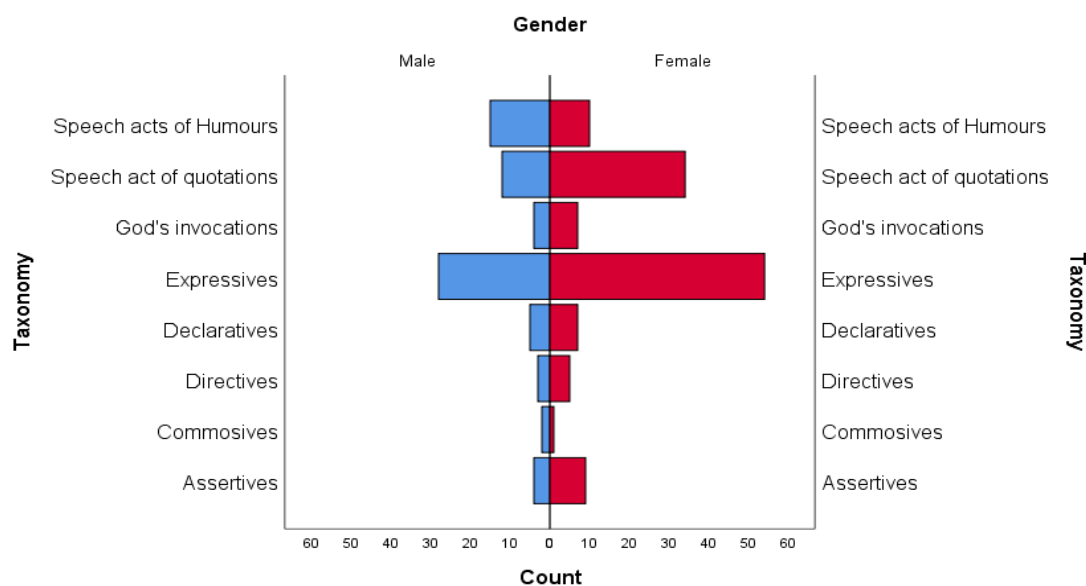


Figure 5: Population pyramid graph for frequencies of taxonomies categories – according to gender

Finally, the association between status categories and taxonomies was gathered to identify taxonomies that line up with each status category. Table (6) provides the association between status categories and taxonomies. Figure (6) depicts a Cluster graph for the association between statuses categories and taxonomies

- **Religious** → God's invocations (F = 11), Speech act of quotations (F = 38).
- **Greetings** → Expressives (F = 48).
- **Congratulations and celebrations** → Expressives (F = 5).
- **Condolences** → Declaratives (F = 12), Expressives (F = 6).
- **Invitation** → Expressives (F = 3).
- **Gratitude** → Expressives (F = 3).
- **Funny and comical** → Speech acts of Humour (F = 12).
- **Ironic** → Speech acts of Humour (F = 12).
- **Dictums** → Assertives (F = 1), Directives (F = 6), Expressives (F = 4), Speech act of quotations (F = 8).
- **Sports** → Directives (F = 2), Expressives (F = 8), Speech acts of Humours (F = 1).
- **Others** → Assertives (F = 12), Commissives (F = 3), Expressives (F = 5).

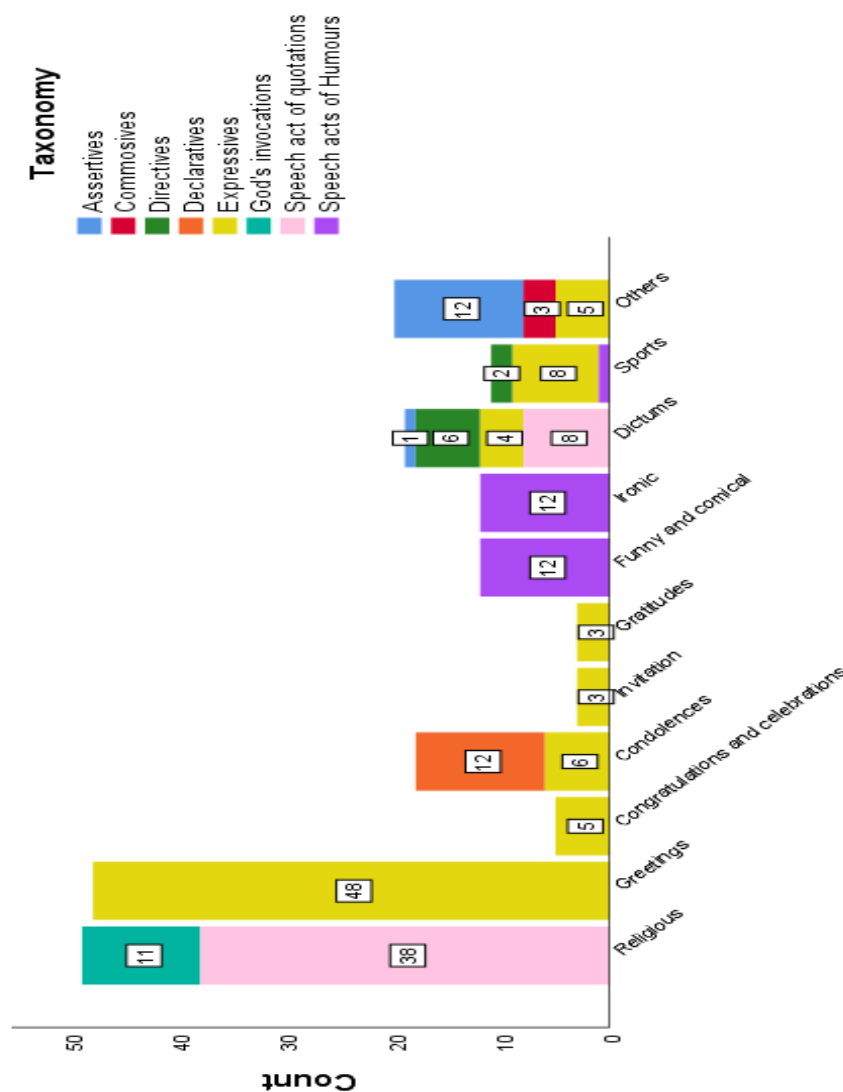


Figure 3: Cluster graph for the association between statuses categories and taxonomies

Table 6: Association between statuses categories and taxonomies (N = 200)

Code	Category	Assertives	Commissives	Directives	Declaratives	Expressives	God's invocations	The speech act of quotations	Speech acts of Humour	Total
1	Religious	--	--	--	--	--	F = 11	F = 38	--	49
2	Greetings	--	--	--	--	F = 48	--	--	--	48
3	Congratulations and celebrations	--	--	--	--	F = 5	--	--	--	5
4	Condolences	--	--	--	F = 12	F = 6	--	--	--	18
5	Invitation	--	--	--	--	F = 3	--	--	--	3
6	Gratitude	--	--	--	--	F = 3	--	--	--	3
7	Funny and comical	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	F = 12	12
8	Ironic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	F = 12	12
9	Dictums	F = 1	--	F = 6	--	F = 4	--	F = 8	--	19
10	Sports	--	--	F = 2	--	F = 8	--	--	F = 1	11
11	Others	F = 12	F = 3	--	--	F = 5	--	--	--	20
	Total	13	3	8	12	82	11	46	25	200

6. Discussion

The 11 categories of status updates are discussed below with exemplification and reference to earlier studies in the field.

6.1 Religious Status Updates

As a form of internet-mediated communication tool, Facebook plays an important role in shaping the religious identity of the Arabic-speaking users in cyberspace. According to Ellison et al. (2007, p. 1144), "Facebook constitutes a rich site for researchers interested in the affordances of social networks due to its heavy usage patterns and technological capacities that bridge online and offline connections".

The findings of the study show that the religious status updates on Facebook were the first most frequent status update among users regardless of their gender and age at the percentage of (F = 49 → 24.5%). The language used on Facebook status updates is highly influenced by the extensive use of religious texts from the Glorious Qur'an and Sunnah (i.e., Prophet Muhammad's supplications) or the Holy Bible. Religious texts play a significant role in social events and have many functions that cover a lot of subjects in many fields in life. Religious texts such as preaching, supplications, prayers, etc., are some of the most

common topics posted or discussed on Facebook (Alshdaifat, 2014; Khalaf, 2018). The analysis of the dataset shows that users post different religious texts on Facebook that have certain functions as discussed in the examples below.

Example (1). A user shares a status as follows:

"لا أستطيع العمل – لا يكلف الله نفسا الا وسعها" "I cannot work – God charges no soul except its capacity".

The user tries to express his/her circumstance at that time that s/he cannot work, and then it is followed with a direct quotation which is a verse from the Qur'an. This verse shows that someone has to do no more than s/he can do which is a blessing from Allah to the followers of Islam.

Example (2). A user shares a status as follows:

"و لكنني خائف – و اصبر لحكم ربك فانك بأعيننا" "However, I am worried – and be patient, [O Muhammad], for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you are in Our eyes. And exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord when you arise".

In this status, the user expresses his/her status that s/he is worried from something "I am worried". Then, it is followed with a verse from the Qur'an as in example (1) above. This verse invites the reader to be more patient.

Example (3). A user shares a status as follows:

"طوبى لمن إختارته وقبلته ليسكن فى ديارك إلى الأبد" (مز: 4) "Blessed be the one whom You chose and brought near to You to dwell in Your courts".

It is a Biblical quotation that is normally posted on social media by Christians when a Christian person passes away.

In short, from the above examples and other examples of the dataset, the study concludes that religion is one of the most effective factors that influence Facebook users' status updates. It is notable from the analysis that Jordanians use religious texts to express their emotions or to describe their circumstances as religion plays an essential role in regulating people's affairs in their daily lives and influencing people's thoughts and behaviours.

Additionally, religious posts are greatly significant when we look into the identity of Jordanian Muslim or Christian Arabic-speaking Facebook users. Such users can and do personalize their Facebook pages according to their Islamic or Christian beliefs. In this line, Yu (2011) argues that Facebook may provide a convenient tool to shape our virtual identities, with all its social, cultural, personal, and religious facets.

6.2 Greetings

Greetings statuses were the second most frequent statuses used ($F = 48 \rightarrow 24\%$). Generally, greetings are important and essential in social interactions by employing them to start and end a rapport. Schottman (1995, p. 489) states that "greetings are the essential oil of encounters of all types and a reassuring confirmation of human sociability and social order". Holmes (1992, p. 308) states "greeting formulas universally serve an affective function of establishing non-threatening contact and rapport but their precise content is clearly culture-specific". Rabab'ah and Malkawi, (2012) argue that social variables such as age, sex, the context of a situation, and time are significant factors in greetings' structure. Also, Islamic norms and Arabic traditions highly influence the rules for initiating proper greetings among

Jordanians. Many verses in the Glorious Qur'an encourage followers to spread greetings in general and the greeting "peace be upon you" in particular.

The dataset analysis shows that specific-time greetings are the most frequent greetings used among Facebook users such as "صباح الخير" "Good morning", "مساء الخير" "Good evening", and "جمعة مباركة عليكم" "You may have a blessed Friday". Surprisingly, although "peace be upon you" is the most common and polite greeting employed among Muslims in daily life due to its socio-religious significance, it is not the most frequent greeting among greetings posted by users when they update their Facebook statuses. Additionally, the analysis of the dataset finds the absence of using common greetings such as "مرحبا" "hello" and "قو الغانمين" "May Allah strengthen the noble" which are used in Jordanian colloquial variety. "قو الغانمين" "May Allah strengthen the noble" is a greeting in Jordanian culture that is used to greet a large number of people. This greeting means that there is no need to shake hands with attendants. It would be inappropriate to say it when handshaking is necessary because that would indicate that the relationships are no longer close between the interlocutors.

6.3 Dictums and Sayings

Being a frequent Facebook user, the researcher noticed that posts of dictums occupy a large capacity of the Facebook walls. The dataset analysis finds that the percentage of sharing dictums is ($F = 19 \rightarrow 9.5\%$). Dictums have inspirational and motivational content. They may provide a reader with a quick and timely burst of wisdom to get back his/her focus or inspire a reader when his/her normal motivation has fizzled or lapsed (Ilyas and Khushi, 2012, p. 502). Khalaf (2018) defines dictums as they are short statements that communicate a general truth, principle, or something that someone believes in. Posts with dictums are commonly found on Facebook, usually attributed to a famous, a poet, and a wise person, or a religious preacher. Sometimes, these posts reflect the users' mood or present situations. Sometimes, users share them because they just like those dictums. For instance, some people post inspiring dictums or quotes just to make themselves feel inspired, or a loving couple who broke up with each other posts quotes related to love which are famous. The following are examples of dictums:

Example (1). "يمكن إضاءة آلاف الشموع من شمعة واحدة ولن يتم تقصير عمر الشمعة السعادة لا تقل مع تقاسمها".
بوذا

"Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared". Buddha

Example (2). "وما كنتُ ممن يدخلُ العشقُ قلبَهُ ولكنَّ من يُبصرُ جفونكَ يَعرشُ"

"Love was never able to enter my heart, but seeing your eyes one inevitably falls".

Example (3).

"اتق شر من أحسنت إليه".

"الطيور على أشكالها تقع".

"Beware the person who has received charity from you".

"Birds of a feather flock together".

6.4 Condolences

Searle (1969) categorizes condolences under the expressive acts that an interlocutor uses to express his/her sorrow at the news of someone's death. Condolences are expressions of sympathy and encouragement. They are highly influenced by culture and religion which are offered to people in calamity to support and share feelings with them that might reduce their sorrow and pain of losing a beloved person. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) argue that condolences are used among people to achieve different functions. They are employed to

express acknowledgment of death, express sympathy, offer assistance, express concern, and express future-oriented remarks. The present study finds that condolences are often used in Facebook status updates and the percentage is (F = 18 → 9%) as discussed in the examples below.

Example (1) "عظم الله اجرکم" *"May God reward you well"*. It is the most frequently spoken and written condolence expression used among Jordanian Muslims. It is a standard Jordanian Arabic expression. It is also a socio-cultural expression used to console others. It is motivated by religious beliefs that a condoler aims to remind the bereaved (addressee) that God will increase his/her rewards because of his/her patience and composure in such a painful situation.

Example (2) "انتقلت الى رحمة الله تعالى اختي العزيزة" *"My dearest sister transferred to the almighty God's mercy"*. This expression and "توفى" "passed away" are the most euphemistic expressions used among Jordanian Muslims to replace the expression "died". These expressions are normally used on social media such as Facebook to break the news of someone's death.

Example (2) "انتقل الى الامجاد السماوية" *"S/he has transferred to the heavenly glories"*. This expression is the most euphemistic expression used among Jordanian Christians to replace the expression "died".

Generally, Jordanian muslims and christians use the verb "انتقل" "transferred" with some expressions to break the news of someone's death. This is to share emotions and show sympathy on the first hand, and due to the belief that they have among them in life after death on the other hand. Using such expressions with the verb "transferred" such as in "انتقل الى رحمة الله تعالى" "s/he transferred to the almighty God's mercy", "انتقل الى جوار ربه" "S/he transferred to the neighborhood of her/his lord", and "انتقل الى الرفيق الاعلى" "S/he transferred to the higher companion her/his lord" are used to remind the bereaved family and other people that the deceased moved to a better place in heaven that could reduce the pains and grief of people in calamity.

6.5 Funny and Comical

The use of jokes has increasingly and noticeably spread among the users of Facebook. They address both important or hot topics and even simple issues by being funny. Users of Facebook often like to share funny stuff on their statuses to laugh or take the attention of others. The analysis of the dataset reveals that users use humor to achieve interpersonal goals such as evoking amusement, maintaining interpersonal and emotional ties amongst Facebook users. Funny and humor used among Facebook users at the percentage of (F = 12 → 6%). The following are examples of funny and humor category:

Example (1) "كل ما اقرر اعتزل الحب بتطلع دفعة مزز جديدة - و بعدين" *"Once I decide to quit love, a group of gorgeous ladies shows up- what to do?!"*.

Example (2) "قال أحد الحكماء لأعرابي: هل أدلك على ثلاثة أشياء تكسب حب الناس من خلالها؟ - قال الأعرابي: "A wise man once said to an Arab: would you like me to inform you about three things to earn people's love? The Arab person said: No!"

Example (3) "الخروج من تحت الحرام في الشتوية اصعب من خروج العروس من بيت أهلها" *"Getting out of your warm blanket in the wintertime is more difficult than the bride getting out of her family's house"*.

6.6 Irony

According to Grice, Cole, and Morgan(1975), irony in the standard pragmatic model is viewed as an apparent violation of the maxim of quality, stating that the speaker does not say what he believes to be false. In this model, when one ironically utters (P), one conversationally implicates its opposite, which is not (P). In computational linguistics, irony is often used as an umbrella term that includes sarcasm, although some researchers make a distinction between irony and sarcasm, considering that sarcasm tends to be harsher, humiliating, degrading, and more aggressive (Clift, 1999; Lee and Katz, 1998). When it comes to irony, hearers or readers should not take the utterance fully literal, rather they must first decide whether the utterance they are dealing with is intended descriptively or interpretively (i.e, considering the deep meaning or the meaning behind the words) (Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

The researcher of the present study has noticed a remarkable trend in the spread of irony by Facebook users. Users of Facebook share a lot of ironic comments and posts especially these days because of covid-19 pandemic. They make a lot of ironic comments that criticize the government procedures, lockdown period, the vaccine, how people react to the virus, etc. Also, users share ironic posts to criticize the government or for fun. The percentage of ironic status updates in this study is (F = 12 → 6%). The following are examples of Ironic status updates on Facebook:

Example (1). "عزيزي رئيس الوزراء من كثر الدعم من الحكومة قربنا نبيع ثيابنا"

"Dear prime minister, because of the massive support from the government, we are about to sell our clothes"!

Example (2). "الحمد لله من الحظر الطويل و زيارة المطبخ كل ساعة خسيت 10 كيلو"

"Praise be to Allah! Because of the long lockdown and visiting the kitchen every hour, I lost 10k".

Example (3). "الحكومة لا تعلم اذا كان مع بعض النواب جنسيات أخرى"

"The government does not know if some of the deputies have other nationalities".

6.7 Sports

Throughout the history of humanity, sports have taken a significant part in societies. Sport also has always had the power to unify people. People might value sport in different ways based on their backgrounds, cultures, and statuses. The statistics on the number of people who are spectators and participants are impressive. Events such as the cricket world cup, grand slams, and Olympic Games attract millions of people (Derwent, 2016).

In some cases, people turn sport into a matter of life and death. Surprisingly, athletes are treated as heroes after a win, or they can be treated as a traitor after a loss. Also, the sport might have a religious significance. Rituals, costumes, and ceremonies might represent things that we can find their reflections in religions (Siedentop and Van der Mars, 2012).

In social media, some people generally like sports and like to share posts about their loved teams and players. Generally, young people are motivated by sports and like to watch matches more than the old. The present study confirms this statement that young people from 18 to 35 years old update their Facebook statuses more than the old do, especially the male users. The analysis finds that out of two hundred Facebook status updates, 11 posts are about sports. All were shared by the male users at the percentage of (5.5%). The following are examples of Facebook status updates about sports:

Example (1). "البايرن يدمر البرشا بالثمانية – ولا بدني اسمع و لا كلمه"
"Bayern Munich devastated Barcelona at 8 goals – I do not want to hear any word".

Example (2). "يالها من ليله قاسية على مشجعين الريال مدريد".
"What a harsh night to Real Madrid fans".

6.8 Congratulations and Celebrations

Congratulation is an expression of approval aimed at strengthening social relations and intimacy. It is an action that makes communication interactional (i.e., social in nature). Congratulation is intended to build relationships and encourage cooperation (Tsilipakou, 2001). Oraiby (2018) divides congratulation into two types namely, congratulation for doing and ritual congratulation. The former is concerned with congratulating others when doing something. It is used to express explicit pleasure to others on their occasions of success or good fortune. For example, "congratulations on your graduation". Whereas, the latter is thoroughly related to social glad occasions which are called archaic. In this type of congratulation, interlocutors congratulate each other on their ritual occasions to express sympathetic happiness for others' glad occasions. Thus, individuals need a social context to congratulate such as having a birthday, an anniversary, and a new year. In this type, people congratulate each other by saying: "Happy Anniversary", "Happy Birthday", and "Happy New Year".

In the current study, the percentage of using congratulations as a status update on Facebook is ($F = 5 \rightarrow 2.5\%$). Below are examples of this category.

Example (1) "My dear brother, Congratulations on your wedding!"

"أخي العزيز مبارك زواجكم"

Example (2) "Congratulations to Barcelona fans!"

"مبارك لمشجعي برشلونة"

Example (3) "مبروك على نجاحك المستحق"

"Congratulations on your well-deserved success!".

6.9 Invitations

Invitations are seen as social and communicative acts that are socially acceptable polite behavior that function to enhance and strengthen the relationship between interlocutors (Al-Khatib, 2006). An invitation is "a communicative act addressed to B's face-needs and intended to enhance and strengthen good and healthy relations between A and B (where A is the inviter and B is the invitee)" (Al-Khatib, 2006, p. 273).

The analysis of dataset finds that users update their Facebook status to make invitations to occasions such as a wedding, engagements, birthdays, etc. The analysis further shows that the percentage of using invitations as status updates on Facebook is low at ($F = 3 \rightarrow 1.5\%$). The following are examples about invitations as a form of Facebook status updates:

Example (1). "بكره خطوبتي – اهلا و سهلا بالجميع". "Tomorrow is my engagement – You are all welcome". The user updates his Facebook status to break the news of his engagement and invite his friend to this occasion.

Example (2). "يشرفني ان ادعو الجميع الى فرح اخي و الذي سيكون في مضافة العائلة لعدد محدود نظرا للظروف".
"الراهنه لوباء كورونا"

"I am honored to invite you to my brother's wedding that will take place in the Family guesthouse and for a limited number of attendants due to the current circumstances of Covid-19 pandemic".

The user here updates his status to invite his friends to his brother's wedding. The user provides information about the place of the wedding and the number of the attendance.

6.10 Gratitude

The speech act of gratitude is a very common strategy to express appreciation among interlocutors in daily life in every culture. Searle (1969) categorizes them under the expressive acts that an interlocutor uses to express his/her gratitude to others. Leech (1983, p. 104) argues that gratitude is inherently polite, courteous, or respectful expressions and characterizes it as a "convivial (i.e., friendly and making you feel happy and welcome)" speech act. It is viewed as an expressive act supported by polite communicative behavior. It enables the hearer to recognize the speaker's intention and strengthen positive politeness. Although gratitude is frequently used in daily life, it was the least category used among others at the percentage of ($F = 3 \rightarrow 1.5\%$). Users normally use social media to offer gratitude to people who participate in occasions such as graduations, funeral prayers, weddings, engagements, birthdays, etc, as in the following examples:

Example (1) "نقدم شكرنا الجزيل الى كل من شاركنا مصابنا في وفاة شقيقنا المرحوم محمد الذي وُري الثرى الخميس الماضي 6-12-2020 الى مثواة الاخير سواء في الحضور او التواصل عبر الاتصال او بالمسجات و نشكر صدق مشاعركم و لا اراكم الله مكروه"

"We offer our heartfelt thanks for all who participated and supported us in our hard calamity in our forgiven deceased who was buried to his last abode last Thursday 06-December-2020, whether in attendance or contacting us through calls or sending messages. We appreciate your sincere feelings and may God protect you from harm".

Example (2). "الشكر الجزيل لك من شاركنا في زفاف شقيقي يوم امس و دامت الافراح حليفة دياركم العامره".
"Many thanks to everyone who participated yesterday in my brother's wedding. May happiness stay in your flourishing homes".

Example (3) "الحمد لله حمدا طيبا مباركا فيه - فقد حصلت على قبول ماستر من جامعة اليرموك لغويات" "Praise be to Allah, much good and blessed praise - I got a master admission in linguistics from Yarmouk University".

6.11 Others

This category includes all Facebook status updates that do not go under the previous ten categories. It might be about family, friends, picnics, food, drinks, etc. It might be just one word. The following are examples of this category:

Example (1) راحت قبل ما أنهى الكلام
She has gone before I ended the speech.

Example (2) الجيم.
The gym.

Example (3) كورونا فيروس.
Corona virus (i.e., Covid-19).

7. Taxonomies Of Speech Acts

This section discusses the findings of Facebook status updates according to Searle's (1969) taxonomy of speech acts (e.g., assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives). However, the study comes out with three new categories that were added to Searle's (1969) taxonomy namely, speech acts of quotations, speech acts of humour, and God's invocations.

7.1 Expressives

They express how the speaker feels about the situation. The different kinds are: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, and deploring. This act reflects emotional reactions to a particular situation and relates to the expression of an emotional state to the receiver. Therefore, the expressive speech act is relatively frequent in the construction of status updates, comprising (F = 82 → 41%) of the speech act sample. The following examples bear witness to the wide use of expressive speech act in constructing status updates on Facebook:

Example (1) "الحمد لله حصلت على بعثة دكتوراة من الولايات المتحدة"

"Praise be to Allah, I got a Ph.D. scholarship from the USA".

Example (2) "الى امي النائمة طويلا, جعل الله قبرك روح وريحان وجنة ونعيم دائم"

"To my Mum who is sleeping forever, may Allah make your grave rest and bounty and an everlasting garden of pleasure".

Example (3) "يشرفني أن أكون فردا من أفراد الأمن العام"

"I am honored to be a policeman in public security".

- In the first example the user expresses his gratitude toward God while in the second example the user expresses her pain and sorrow of losing a beloved person (i.e., her mom). In the third example, the user expresses his honor and happiness to be a policeman in public security.

7.2 Assertives

They commit the speaker to something being the case. This type includes different kinds such as suggesting, putting forward, swearing, boasting and concluding. This category covers any status update used to inform others about the user's activities or current actions, or the status update that describes ideas or information connected with and important to a particular subject or situation. It comprises (F = 13 → 6.5%). Consider the following examples:

Example (1) صار عندنا بنوته حلوه!

"We have got a gorgeous girl!"

Example (2) نحن يد واحدة ضد الفساد!

"We are all one hand against corruption!"

7.3 Declaratives

They change the state of the world immediately.

Example (1) أنت مطروووود..

"You are fired."

Example (2) أنه خارج الخدمة.

"It is out of service."

7.4 Directives

They try to make the addressee perform an action. The different kinds are: asking, ordering, requesting, inviting, advising, and begging. Therefore, this category is found in a variety of contexts, such as making a request, asking a question, giving advice, and placing an order. This category comprises (F = 8 → 4%). Consider the following examples:

Example (1) حدا بيعرف دكتور أسنان شاطر في اربد؟

"Does anyone know a good dentist in Irbid?"

Example (2) تفضلوا على المشاوي!

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“You are welcome to the barbecue!”

7.5 *Commissives*

They commit the speaker to do something in the future. The different kinds are promising, planning, vowing, betting, and opposing. This category comprises (F = 3 → 1.5). The following are examples of this category:

Example (1) مش موافق على أخذ المطعوم – أعطوه للوزراء و النواب.
“I disagree to take the vaccine – Give it to the ministers and the deputies.”

Example (2) بوعدك أنك ما تندم يا حبيبي!
“Oh, my love! I promise you that you will never be regretful!”

7.6 *Speech Act of Quotations*

This category does not exist in Searle's taxonomy of speech acts. This form of speech occurs when the utterance is not originally produced by the Facebook user. Although quotations can be posted randomly, they do reflect some level of the user's mood, feelings, beliefs, intentions, and present situations. This category includes proverbs, song lyrics, poetic verse, famous quotes, Qur'anic or Biblical verses, and supplications of Prophet Muhammad. It comprises (F = 46 □ 23%). The following are examples of this type of speech act:

Example (1) "أولا أدلكم على شيء اذا فعلتم و هيبينكم تحاببتهم؟ أفشوا السلام بينكم"
"May I inform you of something, if you do, you love each other. Promote greeting amongst you by saying peace be upon you(to one another)."

Example (2) "Nobody cares about your story until you win, so win"
"ل الأحد يهتم بقصتك حتى تنتصر، لذا انتصر"

7.7 *Speech Act of Humour*

This speech act does not exist in Searle's (1969) taxonomy; therefore, it is added because it appears frequently in the dataset. According to Lynch's (2002) work, humor is an "intended or unintended message interpreted as funny", i.e., it is the way in which people see that some things are funny or the quality of being funny. These socio-linguistic studies (Banikalef et al., 2014; Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Carr et al., 2012; Pennington & Hall, 2014) confirm that humor serves an essential social function in social networks websites. The findings of the present study support such a claim, with almost (F = 25 □ 12.5%) of status updates contain humorous speech act..

However, the present study disagrees with Banikhalef and Bataineh's (2017) claim that there is a reduction in humor content that may reflect the nature of the Jordanian speech community. In Jordanian culture, it is the expected norm for males to suppress any kind of emotional expression, including humor. This norm of behavior is often encouraged and supported by the society to instill the qualities as espoused in the stereotype of the heroic male (Zalameh), who is featured prominently in Jordanian culture. A male in Jordanian society has to be fearless, resourceful, stoic, serious, and less humorous and this is considered as the ideal male behavior. The following are examples of this classification: :

Example (1). After your ear, keep it on maths. I push the maths .
بعد أذنك خليه اعمل بحسابي. أنا بدفع الحساب.

Example (2). في أطفال معهم أيفون 6 ومشعاجبهم.
أنا لما بابا اشترالي مسطرة اللي فيها ميه ونجوم يومين ما نمتش.
Some kids have I-phone 6 and they are not happy. When my dad bought a ruler that has water and stars, I didn't sleep for two days!

7.8 God's invocations

The dataset analysis finds that many acts of speech were posted in the form of invocation to Almighty God. This is to say, this act is used frequently when the user requests something from Almighty God. Prayers (i.e., duaa') are part of a believer's daily life. A person can make duaa' anywhere and anytime. However, for Muslims, asking for a more important or specific need, it's more appropriate to do duaa' during or after prayers (salat). This category comprises (F = 11 □ 5.5%) as in the following examples:

Example (1) "اللهم لاتجعل في قلبي غيرك، وقرربي منك" (

"Oh God, do not make in my heart other than You and bring me closer to You."

Example (2) الله ماجعني من ال توابين واجعني من المتطهرين

"O Allah, make me of those who return to You often in repentance and make me of those who remain clean and pure"

8. Summary And Recomendations

This has investigated the role of gender in Facebook status updates by Jordanian users. It has analyzed the dataset through applying Searle's (1969) SA framework. Searle's (1969) taxonomy includes five categories namely, expressives, assertives, declaratives, directives, and commissives.

The dataset analysis shows, according to the communicative functions, that the religious status updates category was the most frequently one among users regardless of their gender and age at the percentage of (F = 49 → 24.5%). Religion is one of the most important factors that influence Facebook users' status updates. In contrast, Invitation (F = 3 → 1.5%) and Gratitude (F = 3 → 1.5%) are the least frequent ones. Greetings, which are frequently employed to start and end a rapport, were the second most frequent statuses used (F = 48 → 24%).

The analysis of the dataset through Searle's ((1969) speech act framework indicates that the Expressives taxonomy (F = 82 → 41%) is the most frequent used one. Notably, the Expressive taxonomy is highly used among Facebook users when they update their statuses because through this taxonomy the user can express his/her psychological state by using such verbs as apologize, thank, welcome, appreciate, congratulate, regret, etc. Accordingly, most of the status updates posted by users are ascribed to the category of Expressives. Meanwhile, Commissives taxonomy (F = 3 → 1.5) is the least one among status updates of Facebook regardless of users gender and age.

Moreover, three new speech acts emerged from the dataset analysis and were added to Searle's (1969) taxonomy, namely, God's Invocations, quotations, and humor. These new speech acts are inherently related to the users' socio-cultural background. For example, God's Invocation is a common conversation feature in the Jordanian speech community on one hand. On the other hand, this act of supplication does not frequently appear in a Christian speech community as compared to the Muslim side which agrees with (Banikalef et al., 2013). Banikalef et al., (2013) argue that Jordanian Muslims use invocations in their daily lives in general and on Facebook in particular more than Jordanian Christians do.

This study opens the door for future research on status updates by examining the role of other factors other than gender such as age, level of education, specialization, levels of linguistic proficiency, religious background, and social power. Other studies can also be

conducted to investigate the speech acts of status updates on Facebook in other Arab or non-Arab countries.

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