

Speech Act Analysis of Facebook Status Updates among Young Iraqis

Imad Amer Abdulbaqi, Wan Farah Wani Wan Fakhruddin

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities Kuala Lumpur, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Email: imad.dh1976@gmail.com/aaimad@graduate.utm.my

Corresponding Author Email: wanfarah@utm.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/21905>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/21905

Published Online: 10 July 2024

Abstract

The emergence of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat, has revolutionized interpersonal communication. These platforms connect people, allowing them to receive encouragement and engage in various forms of verbal interactions. Speech acts, encompassing a wide range of linguistic activities, have become prevalent in online communication. People use words not only to express themselves but also to influence others and prompt specific actions. Speech acts play a crucial role in understanding language use in virtual environments. This paper aims to explore the analysis of speech acts in Facebook status updates among young Iraqis. By examining the types, motivations, and impact of speech acts, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of communication patterns in virtual environments. The study focuses on the challenges and issues associated with the language used in speech acts by young Iraqis on Facebook. The investigation of speech acts in Facebook status updates among young Iraqis is particularly relevant due to the widespread use of social media platforms in the region. By shedding light on speech act analysis, this research provides valuable insights into language use and communication dynamics in the digital age. It contributes to the theoretical foundations of speech acts and their application in computer-mediated communication. In conclusion, this paper offers insights into the speech act analysis of Facebook status updates among young Iraqis. By addressing the challenges specific to the context of Facebook and examining the impact of speech acts on social interaction, this study advances our understanding of communication in virtual environments.

Keywords: Speech Acts, CMC, Facebook Messenger, etc.

Introduction

Effective communication is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, encompassing various channels and methods through which individuals convey their intended meanings to others. With the advent of technology, communication has evolved, providing individuals with new avenues for expressing themselves and connecting with others. Social networking sites (SNSs) have emerged as influential platforms, facilitating the sharing of thoughts, information, and interests among individuals worldwide (Raza et al., 2020). Facebook, in

particular, stands out as a globally popular social networking website, enabling users to form connections and engage with a vast network of individuals (Chau et al., 2021).

This review paper focuses on analyzing the medium of Facebook status updates as a form of communication. Facebook status updates hold significant importance in the realm of online communication, as they serve as a means for individuals to express their thoughts, experiences, and emotions. Users perceive their Facebook status updates as a personal diary, documenting their daily activities and events (Abdalahadi et al., 2021). These updates are publicly viewable, allowing individuals to share their lives and opinions with their Facebook connections (Shuaa, et al., 2017).

Understanding the speech acts performed in Facebook status updates provides valuable insights into the motivations and functions behind these acts. Speech act theory, originally proposed by Searle in 1969, offers a framework for examining the intended meaning and communicative functions of language (Searle, 1969). By applying this theory to the analysis of Facebook status updates, we can uncover the various speech acts performed by individuals, such as assertions, requests, expressions of emotions, and more.

This review paper employs a content analysis approach to examine the speech acts performed within Facebook status updates. Content analysis allows researchers to systematically analyze and categorize textual data, providing insights into the patterns, trends, and characteristics of the content being studied. By applying Searle's speech act framework to the analysis, we can identify and classify the different types of speech acts present in Facebook status updates. Furthermore, considering the widespread popularity of Facebook, with millions of users globally and a growing user base in various countries, studying the speech acts in Facebook status updates becomes increasingly relevant. This research specifically focuses on young Iraqis, as Facebook usage has seen significant growth among the younger population in Iraq (D., 2011). By examining the speech acts performed by young Iraqis in their Facebook status updates, we can gain insights into their communication patterns, social dynamics, and cultural influences.

The findings of this review paper will contribute to our understanding of speech acts in the context of Facebook status updates. By analyzing the content of these updates, we can uncover the diverse ways in which individuals utilize language to express themselves, engage with their social networks, and fulfill various roles within society. This research has implications for understanding the complexities of communication in the digital age and the role of Facebook in shaping online interactions.

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has become an integral part of human communication in the modern era. The American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) defines communication as any action through which individuals exchange information about their needs, perceptions, knowledge, or emotional states (Kovacs, 2021). CMC differs significantly from both spoken and written language and is an essential aspect of sociolinguistic research (Meinl, 2013; HEYD, 2021; Odoh & Ugwu, 2018). Recent studies have focused on speech acts formation on social networking sites, highlighting them as a prevalent form of CMC (Tsoumou, 2020).

Facebook, one of the most popular social networking sites, has revolutionized online communication and interaction (Ajabshir, 2019). With the widespread use of electronic devices and internet-enabled platforms, CMC has become the primary mode of

communication. Initially used for entertainment purposes, these platforms have now evolved to serve various communication needs (Ajabshir, 2019).

This study aims to explore the role of Facebook in vocabulary acquisition. It seeks to identify effective strategies for learning vocabulary through Facebook among its users, with a specific focus on improving English vocabulary acquisition (Ghaouar et al., 2019). The study employed a questionnaire and an experiment conducted within a Facebook group called "Vocabulary Acquisition." The participants' progress in vocabulary acquisition was evaluated through pre- and post-experiment tests, demonstrating significant improvements among the individuals involved (Ghaouar et al., 2019).

Despite some challenges, Facebook remains a widely utilized and influential platform that shapes language use and communication practices in the digital era (María et al., 2022). Understanding the impact of social networking sites like Facebook on language and communication dynamics is crucial for researchers studying CMC and its effects on society (Santa María et al., 2022).

Computer-mediated communication has transformed the way we communicate, with social networking sites like Facebook playing a significant role. CMC differs from traditional forms of communication, and its influence on language and social interactions is a subject of ongoing research. Facebook, in particular, has been found to be an effective tool for vocabulary acquisition and informal language learning. As scholars delve deeper into the complexities of CMC, it is essential to recognize the profound influence of social networking sites on our linguistic and social reality.

Social Network Sites (SNSs)

The use of social networking sites (SNS) has become increasingly prevalent in today's digital age, with Facebook standing out as the most popular platform worldwide (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Rashid et al., 2016). In this research, the focus is on the language employed by an apostate on her Facebook Timeline in Malaysia, where discussing apostasy is considered taboo (Dhir et al., 2018). Apostasy, the act of renouncing one's faith, is not tolerated in a nation where Islam is the state religion, and public denouncement of faith can lead to serious consequences (Mohamad et al., 2017). However, the advent of the internet and SNS has provided apostates with a platform to express their thoughts and connect with others, bridging the gap between them and the dominant society (Mohamad et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, the success of SNS, particularly Facebook, has been evaluated based on user perspectives and an extended information systems success (ISS) model in Iraq (Al-Azawei & Al-Azawi, 2020). The model includes constructs such as information quality, system quality, service quality, intrinsic motivation, perceived interaction, Facebook use, user satisfaction, and net benefits. This evaluation aims to assess the effectiveness of Facebook in meeting user needs and understanding its impact in different cultural contexts (Al-Azawei & Al-Azawi, 2020).

SNSs, including Facebook, offer various advantages such as facilitating connections, supporting collaboration and communication, and creating marketing opportunities (Hess et al., 2020; Kane et al., 2014; Kwon et al., 2013; Schreiner et al., 2021). These platforms fulfill the fundamental human need for social connection and belonging (Zhao et al., 2012; Sariyska et al., 2018). However, excessive and unchecked Facebook usage can have negative effects, and it is important to recognize the potential drawbacks (Chuang, 2020).

In the Arab world, SNS played a significant role in political conversations during the Arab Spring revolutions, with platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube being heavily utilized (Howard et al., 2018). Evaluating the effectiveness of SNS in Arab nations, such as Iraq, is crucial given the cultural and contextual differences from the Western world where these platforms originated (Al-Azawei, 2018). Assessing users' attitudes towards SNS in these countries can help SNS companies tailor their services to meet users' needs in diverse cultural contexts (Al-Azawei, 2018).

Microblogging, a feature available on SNS platforms, enables users to exchange text-based messages and plays a significant role in language functions on platforms like Facebook (Buechel & Berger, 2018). Facebook has also been utilized as a research instrument to investigate various social phenomena, particularly among young people in Iraq (Lee & Atkinson, 2019; Al-Rawi, 2020). The ability to update statuses and access other features on Facebook allows users to express their thoughts, emotions, and engage with each other (Al-Rawi, 2020).

In Iraq, Facebook has gained popularity among young people, particularly those in the university-age range (Castillo et al., 2020; Kokkinos & Saripanidis, 2017). A significant percentage of the Iraqi population, around 61.9%, is active on Facebook, indicating its growing influence among young individuals (internetworldstats.com). Therefore, this research focuses on Iraqi student users of Facebook aged 18 to 24 years, as the platform continues to attract this demographic (Castillo et al., 2020; Kokkinos & Saripanidis, 2017).

In summary, the research emphasizes the role of Facebook as a prominent SNS worldwide. It explores the language employed by an apostate in Malaysia, evaluates the success of Facebook based on an extended ISS model in Iraq, examines the advantages and potential drawbacks of SNS usage, highlights the impact of SNS in the Arab world, particularly during the Arab Spring, and discusses the use of Facebook as a research instrument. The research aims to gain insights into the strategic use of language by apostates and assess the effectiveness of Facebook in meeting user needs in different cultural contexts, particularly among young people in Iraq.

Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory, introduced by Searle (1969); Austin (1962), is a fundamental concept in pragmatics that explores how utterances convey information and perform various activities. It has made significant contributions to the field of linguistics. The use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) is crucial in sociolinguistic research as it differs from both spoken and written language. Recent studies by Heyd (2021); Odoh and Ugwu (2018) highlight the importance of CMC in sociolinguistic research and examine speech acts on social networking sites, popular platforms for communication. These studies are grounded in Speech Act Theory (SAT) and aim to explain the communicative functions of language and how meaning is derived from utterances.

Furthermore, analyzing speech acts on social networking sites provides valuable insights into the social and cultural norms that govern speech acts within specific speech communities (Sun et al., 2021). Research in this area focuses on understanding how language is used to perform actions and convey meaning. By studying speech acts in different contexts, researchers can

gain a deeper understanding of the communicative functions of language and how listeners interpret utterances.

To conclude, Speech Act Theory, developed by Searle (1969) and Austin (1962), provides a framework for understanding the use of language to perform actions and convey meaning. The integration of computer-mediated communication and Speech Act Theory in sociolinguistic research offers insights into the communicative functions of language and the interpretation of utterances. Analyzing speech acts on social networking sites contributes to identifying the social and cultural norms that govern speech acts within specific communities (Smithb, 2003).

Types of Speech Acts

According to Austin (1962) cited in Simamora et al (2020:11), the creation of an utterance can be categorized into three distinct types of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. A locutionary act refers to the act of stating a particular phrase with a specific sense and reference, which is essentially equivalent to the conventional meaning of a word. Illocutionary acts, on the other hand, are words or phrases that have a specific conventional meaning, such as informing, demanding, warning, or undertaking (Hernández, 2013). Illocutionary acts are also known as illocutions. Perlocutionary acts, on the other hand, are speech acts delivered with the intention of achieving a goal by influencing or affecting the listener, such as persuading, discouraging, shocking, or deceiving (Hernández, 2013).

The study of human communication often involves the examination of these three types of speech acts. Among them, illocutionary acts are considered the most implicit and intended in terms of the speech's meaning. The differentiation between these three categories of speech acts can be relatively straightforward, thanks to the three main sentence patterns in the English language: declarative, interrogative, and imperative. Each sentence pattern corresponds to a particular type of communication function: statement, inquiry, and command/request, respectively (Tuhai, 2022).

Furthermore, speech acts can be further classified as either direct or indirect. A direct speech act occurs when there is a direct connection between the structure of the utterance and its intended function. In contrast, an indirect speech act occurs when there is not a direct connection between the structure and function. For example, a declarative sentence used to make a statement is considered a direct speech act, while a declarative sentence used to make a request is an example of an indirect speech act (Koester, 2002). Although interrogatives are commonly associated with indirect speech acts in the English language, they are rarely used as such. Direct speech acts are often perceived as less polite or civil compared to indirect speech acts in English, but to fully understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to consider the broader context and not focus solely on individual words performing specific speech acts (ibid: 55-56).

Searle's Classification of Speech Acts

Searle's categorization of speech acts, which remains widely recognized, classifies them based on their illocutionary functions (Searle, 1969:12-17). According to Searle, there are five distinct categories of speech acts:

- Assertives: These speech acts involve verbs such as "state," "assert," "complain," and "describe." They aim to convey information and can be evaluated as true or false (Searle, 1969:12).
- Directives: Directives are speech acts that persuade the addressee to perform or refrain from an action. Verbs like "ask," "order," "request," and "demand" are used in directives (Searle, 1969:12).
- Commissive: Commissive are speech acts where the speaker makes a promise or commitment to perform a future action. Verbs like "promise," "vow," "commit," and "undertake" fall under this category (Searle, 1969:14).
- Expressives: Expressives allow the speaker to convey their internal state or personal opinion (Mey, 1993:121). They do not provide objective information about the external world.
- Declarations: Declarations have the power to change the world through their utterance. They possess a word-to-world direction of fit and can alter the status of things. Verbs like "declare," "appoint," "nominate," and "quit" are examples of declaration-related verbs (Searle, 1979:16).

By understanding these categories, we can gain insights into the different types of speech acts and their functions in communication.

Speech Acts on Social Networking Sites

Research on speech acts in the context of social networking sites and programs has gained academic interest. Studies have focused on analyzing text messages, status updates, and comments posted by Facebook users to understand the different speech acts used. The majority of these studies collected data from Facebook status updates Tsoumou (2020), while fewer studies investigated speech acts in user comments (Syafitri, 2020). Several studies based their analyses on Searle's speech act theory (Mohamad, 2018).

Overall, the findings of these studies suggest that expressive, assertive, and directive speech acts are commonly used in online interactions, while submissive speech acts are less frequent. The speech acts observed in online postings on Facebook mirror those found in face-to-face encounters. However, it can be challenging to classify a status update as a specific speech act due to the potential presence of multiple intentions within a single post (Banikalef & Al Bataineh, 2017).

Research has also explored the frequency of speech acts within specific populations on Facebook. Expressive and forceful speech behaviors were found to be prevalent in the cultures of Pakistan, Egypt, and the United States, but other speech acts such as commanding, humorous, quoting, invoking God, and commissive acts were not universally shared among cultures (Khalaf, 2019).

One study conducted at Ain Shams University in Egypt examined the communicative purposes of Facebook status updates using Searle's speech act framework and Grice's theory of cooperative maxims and implicature (Khalaf, 2019). The research analyzed ten different postings and their responses, considering both the formal aspects and functional manifestations of digital discourse. The data revealed that direct communication was more common than indirect speech, and various functions such as sermons, prayers, greetings, online identity disclosure, and addressing intended audiences were observed. The study concluded that Facebook language serves as a means of social interaction (Khalaf, 2019, p.36).

Speech Acts in Facebook Status Update

The use of social media platforms such as Facebook as a method of communication is becoming more widespread (Manca et al., 2016). Researchers have access to a wealth of data because to the massive amounts of information that are exchanged on these platforms. The analysis of speech acts that take place inside Facebook updates, comments, and messages is an interesting field of research. Speech acts are an essential component of communication. Due to the difficulties associated with studying Facebook, there is a paucity of research on the various speech acts that occur on the platform. A single Facebook status post might comprise many speech acts, making it difficult to define it as exclusively directive or expressive (Banikalef & Al Bataineh, 2017). This is in contrast to face-to-face talks, in which speaker purpose can be deduced from tone or body language (Banikalef & Al Bataineh, 2017). Despite this, there is still a dearth of published material on the subject of Facebook speech studies. This problem is likely made worse by the complexity of the site as well as the co-occurrence of several speech acts inside a single status post. As a consequence of this, it could be challenging to untangle the intents or actions that are encoded inside a single status update (for example, expressive speech acts in combination with directive speech acts) (Khalaf & Rezk, 2019).

According to recent research Tsoumou (2020), multilingualism in Congo-Brazzaville is a severe issue. This is because the country has more than 60 live languages, which makes it a serious concern. The research looked at the many ways in which individuals communicate with one another on political Facebook conversations. More than 265,147 words worth of engagement on Facebook were examined by a tool and interpreted as a collection of speech acts carried out by people. As a consequence of this, every single post made on Facebook is considered to be a speech act done by users, and communication on Facebook as a whole is an interaction that is not rationally organized. As a result, status updates on Facebook might be seen as communicative acts, while comments serve as replies to actions that initiate communication. According to the findings of this research, there is no such thing as an illocutionary force that does not have a perlocutionary consequence equivalent to it. When both the illocutionary force and the perlocutionary force of an utterance are seen as being vital to the communication, this is known as a complete speech act. In order to offer a thorough description of the data that were gathered over a period of ten months, both qualitative and quantitative analyses were carried out in combination with one another. The research also demonstrates that critical components of a complete dialogic speech act on Facebook include both posts and comments made by users.

According to Gribach et al (2019), the use of communication platforms like Facebook, which are gradually becoming more important components of modern society, is viewed as a vital way of self-representation. The examination of people's status updates on Facebook helps us to grasp the underlying reasons that may help us discover answers to certain difficulties, and it can also represent a person's cultural values, views, and ideas. This can help us figure out how to solve certain problems. In addition, research has shown that individuals are able to create their identities and display their thoughts as well as personal activities via the status updates that they post on Facebook. Therefore, researchers could benefit from analyzing these status updates in order to investigate the socialization patterns of users and gain insight into how people think. This may also shed light on important challenges with the goal of finding acceptable solutions.

Carr et al (2012) conducted a study on speech acts in Facebook status updates within Computer-Mediated Communication. They collected data from 204 different updates shared by 46 random Facebook users in the United States over a period of 14 days, collecting data three times a day. The data was analyzed using (Searle's taxonomy, 1969). The study revealed that expressive speech acts, particularly assertives, were the most common in the statuses. Additionally, approximately 20% of the speech acts contained humor, shedding light on how individuals communicate with each other through social media.

In a similar vein, Mohanlal et al (2013) focused on status updates in an online student group page called UCC GOSSIPZ, targeting university students in Cape Coast (UCC). They recognized the limited consideration given to African environmental conditions in previous online language studies, which predominantly focused on American, Asian, and European contexts. Using Austin (1962); Searle (1969); Warscauer & Zohry's (2002) theoretical framework, they aimed to understand the various categories of speakers adopted by Ghanaian students in their Facebook status updates, along with the pragmatic foundations underlying these messages. The study employed Speech Act Theory (SAT) to clarify the intended significance of status communications categorized as illocutionary acts. Data from 60 UCC undergraduate students were collected over three consecutive days and analyzed using content analysis methodology.

The study identified five types of speech acts in the dataset: directives, declarations, commissives, expressive statements, and quotations. Directives were the most prevalent, accounting for 35% of the messages, followed by assertives (23.3%), expressive statements (21.7%), quotations (11.7%), and commissive actions (8.3%). The analysis also revealed that messages aiming to change one's status, such as making requests, asking questions, giving recommendations, or providing denominations, could be interpreted differently by different recipients due to their ambiguous nature. The interpretations depended on the recipients' expectations and prior knowledge.

In another study, Syafitri (2020) conducted research to identify expressive speech act categories and explain the modes of expressive utterances used by Indonesian Facebook users in their statuses. The study employed the observational method, including non-participant observation and note-taking techniques, with data analyzed using Sudaryanto's (2015) pragmatic identity technique. The findings supported Ronan's (2015) theory of expressive speech act categories and Alwi et al.'s (2003) theory of modes of utterance. The study revealed fourteen distinct types of expressive speech acts, conveying emotions such as disagreement, apologies, admiration, grief (sadness), exclamation (complaint), volition (hope), anger, disappointment, encouragement, satire, irritation, pride, and congratulations. In conclusion, the studies discussed shed light on the ways individuals communicate through Facebook status updates and the various speech acts employed. The research indicates that expressive speech acts, including assertives, directives, and quotations, are prevalent in these online interactions. Moreover, the analysis highlights the potential ambiguity of messages, which can be interpreted differently by recipients based on their expectations and prior knowledge. The studies also underscore the significance of Facebook posts and comments as integral components of dialogic speech acts. While previous research has largely focused on American, Asian, and European contexts, these studies emphasize the need for further exploration of speech acts in different cultural and linguistic contexts, such as Arabic Iraqi, to

better understand the diverse ways individuals use Facebook status updates to communicate and construct their identities.

Speech Acts in Facebook Status Updates in The Arab and Iraqi Context

Speech acts in the context of Facebook status updates in the Arab and Iraqi culture have been the subject of limited but intriguing investigations. Previous research has primarily focused on comparing speech acts across different cultures, such as apologizing, denying an offer, expressing praise, accepting invitations, and making requests, to identify similarities. Within the Iraqi context, there appears to be a particular interest in studying refusals, apologies, and praise.

A study conducted by Mohammed et al (2020) explored Iraqi Facebook users' behavior when it comes to praising others. This research expanded the scope of speech act studies by examining virtual interactions on Facebook. The results indicated a preference for verbal responses over nonverbal ones, and it was found that Iraqi Facebook users employed complementing sensitivity tactics, as indicated by (Eslami & Kuo, 2015). Another noteworthy finding was that males were more likely to utilize the assessment tactic of returning a praise when they received one.

In a separate study, Ali (2020) investigated gender disparities and similarities between Iraqi and Malay college students in the context of speech acts. The research involved thirty Iraqi and thirty Malay college students and utilized methods such as Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) and Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs). The findings, analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, revealed that both groups were similarly inclined to use various bolstering actions when responding to criticism. However, Iraqi students were more likely to create their own methods. Additionally, women from both Iraqi and Malay backgrounds were more prone to employing affirming body language while commenting compared to males from the same ethnicities. These findings have implications for ESL and linguistics educators.

Apologies have also been a topic of investigation in the Iraqi context. Ahmed (2017) explored apologetic discourse among native speakers of Iraqi Arabic and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Iraq. The study aimed to compare the apologetic practices and beliefs of these two groups. Various scenarios were designed to elicit apologies, taking into account factors such as social standing, gender, age, proximity to the victim, and severity of the offense. The primary findings highlighted the significant influence of the collectivistic nature of Iraqi culture and the socio-religious concept of atonement on the selection of apologetic strategies. Furthermore, it was observed that EFL students in Iraq were less concerned with the grammatical aspects of English apologies and focused more on the pragmatic aspects. Apologies given in the participants' native Iraqi Arabic served different purposes compared to those offered in English. Native Iraqi Arabic speakers tended to provide more extensive apologies for certain actions, while Iraqi EFL students often used a single apology or no approach at all.

Mohammed (2020) is an Iraqi EFL non-major student concerned in the pragmatic level identification and production of invitation speech acts. A theoretical framework for invites is presented first. After that, an analysis is performed using a model of invitation strategies. Data were collected from the Department of Dentistry at Al-Mustaqbal University College for the 2019-2020 school year. Twenty advanced-level Arabic-speaking undergraduates were given a test, and their results were analyzed. The data is gathered via the use of a discourse completion task and multiple-choice questionnaires. The students' performance on the test's recognition section is questionable since they cannot differentiate invitation from other

attitudes. The students made more use of certain procedures than others and used a strategy not included in the model throughout the production phase.

Similarly, Jabber (2020) analyzed how Iraqi speakers really extend invites in conversation. By analyzing the verbiage and social setting of genuine invitations. Personal observation by a researcher is translated into a short conversation in real life. Searle's theory of speech acts is applied to the selected data for analysis. According to Searle's definition, the Felicity criterion is used to prove that an invitee is from Iraq and that the speaker satisfies these qualifications. According to the findings, native speakers of Iraqi utilize a combination of declarative and interrogative words to make sincere invites in an illocutionary manner. The researchers also found that when Iraqi speakers followed Searle's felicity criteria, their invitations were authentic (sincere).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students from two distinct cultural backgrounds—Iraqi and Turkish—are compared in terms of their pragmatism skills and how they make and understand requests in English (English).

Turki et al (2020) looked at how students of English as a foreign language in Iraq reject to do certain speech acts at varying degrees of ability. In the research, answers to invitations, recommendations, and offers are compared between students in their second year of English and students in their fourth year of English. The WDCT questionnaire was used to collect data from forty Iraqi undergraduate students of English. Twenty of these students were in their second year of study, while the other twenty were in their fourth year. The acquired data were subjected to statistical analysis in order to conduct a quantitative examination in accordance with Beebe et al (1990) refusal theory. According to the findings of the study, straight refusals were more prevalent among students taking English for a second year than among students taking English for a fourth year. This shows that the later were more aware than the former of how to use refusals in a constructive manner.

In his study, Al-Khazaali et al (2021) highlights how speech acts disclose a significant amount of information about the social structure of the poetry text. The vast majority of relevant research on poetic speech acts has concentrated on speech and literature from the West. As a result, the speech act behavior of Arabic literature, particularly poetry, has been largely overlooked. He is considered to be the most renowned Arab poet of the 20th century. Mohammad Mahdi Al-Jawahiri exemplifies the pinnacle of Arabic Classicism and poeticity, which is why he has been given the moniker "The Greatest Arab Poet" by many commentators. In Al-Jawahiri's masterwork, 'O Sir! Inspire Me.' With the help of Searle's classification of major speech acts as well as the findings of the analysis, the findings demonstrate that the poet Al-Jawahiri uses more representational and expressive speech acts in his poem to strengthen the belief that what he gives is a truth to be believed about the praise and description of the King, His Majesty Hussein bin Talal, as well as his genuine love and affection for him. The fact that a connection has been found between socio-cultural factors and the development of speech acts in poetry lends credence to this assertion. It has been shown that Islam, Arabism, and distinguished heritage each had a key role in creating the cultural norms that regulate the execution of the poem's primary speaking acts (Al-Khazaali et al., 2021)

The purpose of this research is to explore, among young Facebook users in Iraq, the creation of language by means of speech acts found in Facebook status updates (FSUs). In particular, the purpose of the research is to determine the different kinds of speech acts that are uploaded on social media by Iraqi males and females, as well as the ways in which these speech acts reflect patterns of socio-pragmatic and cultural values. Even though there have

been a number of illuminating research projects conducted on speech acts within the context of Iraq Mohammed (2020); Rasheeda (2020); Hammadi (2019); Al-Hilu (2020); Turki et al (2020), research on the impact of FSUs on speech behaviors is still in its infancy, and additional research is required. This research aims to make a contribution to the current body of knowledge by investigating the connection between functional linguistic units (FSUs) and speech acts, with a specific emphasis on how FSUs and speech acts in Iraq reflect socio-pragmatic and cultural values in that country.

In conclusion, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature by investigating how speech acts are constructed in Facebook status updates among young Iraqi users. Previous studies in Iraq have focused on different aspects of digital discourse, but none have specifically explored speech acts in this context. By examining the types of speech acts used by male and female Iraqis and their reflection of socio-pragmatic and cultural values, this research can contribute to our understanding of language use in non-Western societies. The study also has implications for language teaching, intercultural communication, and the development of culturally sensitive practices. Overall, this study has the potential to provide valuable insights and contribute to the existing body of knowledge on speech acts in digital discourse.

Research Gap Identified in This Study

This study aims to address a significant research gap in the existing literature on Iraqi sociolinguistics regarding the use of speech acts in computer-mediated communication, specifically focusing on Facebook status updates. Despite the growing body of research on digital discourse in Iraq, there is a dearth of studies specifically examining the speech acts employed by young Iraqi users on Facebook. This research seeks to fill this void by exploring the ways in which young Facebook users in Iraq utilize speech acts in their online interactions, shedding light on their communication patterns and social practices.

While discourse analysis serves as the underlying framework for this study, the specific context of Facebook status updates in the Arab Iraqi context remains understudied. Therefore, there is a pressing need to fill this research gap and expand our understanding of how Arabic Iraqi individuals utilize the status updates feature on Facebook to communicate and construct their identities.

Previous research conducted in Iraq has examined various aspects of digital discourse, but speech acts in Facebook status updates among young Iraqis have not been thoroughly investigated. By focusing on this specific research gap, this study has the potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the production of language through speech acts among young Iraqi users of Facebook status updates.

In order to provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature, an analysis of relevant studies in the field of computer-mediated communication, social networking sites, and speech acts on Facebook was conducted. Although some of these studies may not be directly related to this specific research, they contribute to our understanding of the broader context of computer-mediated communication research and its methodologies. Therefore, the literature review was refined to focus on studies specifically examining speech acts in the Iraqi context, with particular emphasis on Facebook status updates.

In summary, this review paper identifies the research gap related to the usage of speech acts in Facebook status updates among young Iraqi users. By addressing this gap, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of communication patterns and social practices within the Arab Iraqi context. This research has the potential to fill a significant void in the literature and

provide valuable insights into the production of language through speech acts in the digital realm..

Conclusion

The concept of "words" having meaning is the topic of discussion in speech act theory. A theory that examines the function of the utterance in connection to the behavior of speakers and hearers in interpersonal communication is often referred to by this term. It is frequently employed in the field of linguistics.

At first, studies into the nature of communication on Facebook focused mostly on analyzing the interactional elements of Facebook as a parallel to those found in the more conventional face-to-face form. As time has progressed, there has been a movement in interest towards examining codeswitching in Facebook, placing the emphasis on the idea that Facebook is a multilingual environment in which individuals from diverse backgrounds gather to communicate their emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Specifically, the attention has shifted towards investigating whether or not users of Facebook switch between languages when conversing with one another.

The use of speech act theory came about as a direct result of its practical application in the earlier research on natural language processing and computer-mediated communication . In addition, SAT allows researchers to expose the intended meaning of status updates that have been recognized and categorized as illocutionary activities. Expression, symbol, and even body language are all potential channels via which communication might take place. Communication connotes a great deal of different things. The capacity to employ language forms in a range of situations, reflecting the connections between the speakers engaged as well as the social and cultural context of the situation, is referred to as pragmatic competence. To summarize, the diverse modes of communication that surfaced as a result of the categorizing of the status updates included anything from expressing how one was feeling to sharing quotations and poetry. People were able to not only express their feelings but also share information about their day-to-day activities, such as what they were doing or what was going on in their lives at that very time, via the use of status updates. This demonstrates how socialization patterns evolve via the exchange of ideas, information, and emotions among individuals. People let other network members know they are present in a variety of ways, and updating their status is only one of those methods. Not only does this feature make it easier for individuals to maintain their connections with one another, but it also helps to strengthen the friendships that already exist amongst members.

Theoretical and Contextual Contribution of the Research

This study of linguistic action research on the emergence of new Facebook contexts among Iraqi youth makes important theoretical and contextual contributions to existing knowledge. Theoretically, this study extends the application of Speech Act Theory (SAT) developed by Searle (1969); Austin (1962) to electronic communication (CMC) and social media channels. By examining the types, motivations, and consequences of speech acts in Iraqi youth's Facebook status updates, this study provides empirical evidence to further develop the theoretical understanding of how language is used to perform actions and convey meaning in virtual situations.

As a contextual contribution, this study fills an important research gap in Iraqi sociolinguistics and digital linguistics. Despite the widespread use of social media platforms in Iraq, especially among young people, there is a dearth of research specifically examining the communicative

functions and linguistic patterns that new Facebook practices reflect in this cultural and linguistic context. The findings of this study offer valuable insight into the ways Iraqi youth use digital platforms, such as Facebook, to construct their social identity, express their emotions, and navigate social networks.

Furthermore, this research suggests avenues for future studies on the role of social media in Iraq, potentially leading to a more nuanced understanding of how individuals in this cultural context leverage digital platforms for various communicative and identity-related purposes. Overall, this research represents a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge by bridging the theoretical foundations of Speech Act Theory with the empirical examination of computer-mediated communication, specifically in the context of young Iraqi users' Facebook status updates. The insights generated from this study can inform future research on language use, identity construction, and communication patterns in the digital age, particularly within the Arab Iraqi cultural and linguistic landscape.

Future Scope

An additional piece of study might be carried out to investigate the similarities and differences in complementing behavior that occur during face-to-face and online virtual interactions, respectively. The reactions of the audiences to the posts should be analyzed in subsequent research in order to broaden the scope of the current investigation. The impact that the posts have had on the general public may be better understood by analyzing the reactions of the viewers to the postings. Studying people's comments on various topics is one of the other aspects of Facebook that may be investigated; studying people's status updates is only one very minor component of Facebook. Research opportunities also exist in the areas of gender-based identity constructions and the gendered use of language in social networking status updates. Since the introduction of more complex technology, there has been a noticeable increase in the frequency of online communication. Because online communication is a mix of written and spoken communication, it has the potential to create new subjects or sub-themes that fall under already established speech acts. In light of this development, more research on speech acts in online communication should be carried out.

References

- Ab Rashid, R., Yahaya, M. F., Rahman, M. F. A., & Yunus, K. (2016). Teachers' informal learning via social networking technology. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (Online)*, 11(10), 76.
- Abdalahadi, H., Al-Khawaldeh, N., Al Huneety, A., & Mashaqba, B. (2023). A corpus-based pragmatic analysis of Jordanians Facebook status updates during COVID-19. *Ampersand*, 10, 100099.
- Ahmed, A. H. (2017). The pragmatics of apology speech act behaviour in Iraqi Arabic and English.
- Ajabshir, Z. F. (2019). The effect of synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) on EFL learners' pragmatic competence. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 92, 169-177.
- Al-Azawei, A. (2018). Predicting the adoption of social media: An integrated model and empirical study on Facebook usage. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Information, Knowledge, and Management*, 13, 233-258.

- Al-Azawei, A., & Al-Azawi, R. (2021, February). Evaluating Facebook success in Iraq: An extension of the DeLone and McLean's model of information systems success (ISS). In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 1804, No. 1, p. 012114). IOP Publishing.
- Al-Hilu, M. J. (2020). THE USE OF METAPHOR IN IRAQI COMPLIMENTS: A CULTURE-BASED STUDY. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 17(7), 8245-8264.
- Ali, A. H., & Al-Ahbabi, I. S. A. (2022). A Pragmatic Study of Speech Acts in Iraqi and American Parliamentary Electioneering Campaign Posters. *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities*, 29(10, 2), 1-21.
- Ali, S. A. (2020). Gender and Supportive Moves of Criticism: Evidence from Iraqi-Arabic and Malay Speech Communities. *Journal of the College of Languages (JCL)*, (42), 27-50.
- Aljasir, S., Bajnaid, A., Elyas, T., & Alnawasrah, M. (2017). Themes of Facebook status updates and levels of online disclosure: The case of university students. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 8(7), 80-97.
- Aljuboori, A. F., Fashakh, A. M., & Bayat, O. (2020). The impacts of social media on University students in Iraq. *Egyptian Informatics Journal*, 21(3), 139-144.
- Al-Khazaali, M. A. R. (2021). Influence of Socio-Cultural Aspects on the Production of Main Speech Acts in Mohammed Mahdi Al-Jawahiri's Poem'O Sir! Inspire me. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, 21(1).
- Al-Rawi, A. (2020). Women's activism and new media in the Arab world. State University of New York Press.
- Austin, J. L. (1975). How to do things with words. Harvard university press.
- Awl, D. (2011). Facebook me: A guide to socializing and promoting on Facebook. California: Peachpit Press.
- Banikalef, A. A. A., & Bataineh, K. B. (2017). A sociolinguistic study of speech act realization patterns in Jordanians' Facebook status updates. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 9(3), 264-283.
- Bataineh, A., and N. Hussein. "The effect of using webcam chat on the undergraduate EFL students' pragmatic competence." *International Journal of education. ISSN 1948-4576. VO. 7. NO 2* (2015).
- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of computer-mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230.
- Buechel, E. C., & Berger, J. (2018). Microblogging and the value of undirected communication. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 28(1), 40-55.
- Carr, C. T., Schrock, D. B., & Dauterman, P. (2012). Speech acts within Facebook status messages. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 31(2), 176-196
- Castillo de Mesa, J., Gómez-Jacinto, L., López Peláez, A., & Erro-Garcés, A. (2020). Social networking sites and youth transition: The use of Facebook and personal well-being of social work young graduates. *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 230.
- Chau, D., & Lee, C. (2021). "See you soon! ADD OIL AR!": Code-switching for face-work in educational Facebook groups. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 184, 18-28.
- Choi, J., Jung, J., & Lee, S. W. (2013). What causes users to switch from a local to a global social network site? The cultural, social, economic, and motivational factors of Facebook's globalization. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(6), 2665-2673.
- Chuang, Y. W. (2020). Promoting consumer engagement in online communities through virtual experience and social identity. *Sustainability*, 12(3), 855.

- Dhir, A., Kaur, P., & Rajala, R. (2018). Why do young people tag photos on social networking sites? Explaining user intentions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 38(1), 117-127.
- Elttayef, A. I., & Hussein, N. O. (2017). Arab learners' problems in learning English language: A teacher perspective. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 40(9), 1-6.
- Facebook, "Facebook statistics," 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://newsroom.fb.com/companyinfo/>. [Accessed: 20-Apr-2018]
- Frost, R. L., & Rickwood, D. J. (2017). A systematic review of the mental health outcomes associated with Facebook use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 76, 576-600.
- Gribach, S. V., Sibul, V. V., & Kolosovskaya, E. V. (2019). Self-representation through social network status messages: Psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and gender aspects. *Training, Language and Culture*, 3(4), 56-64.
- Gunter, S. K. (2009). *Sams teach yourself Facebook in 10 minutes*. Sams Publishing.
- Hammadi, S. S. (2019). An Inter-language Pragmatic Study of Request Acts by Iraqi and Turkish EFL Learners: A Comparative Study. *Midad Al-Adab Refreed Journal*, 1(17), 823-844.
- Hernández, L. P. (2013). Illocutionary constructions:(multiple source)-in-target metonymies, illocutionary ICMs, and specification links. *Language & communication*, 33(2), 128-149.
- Hess, T., Matt, C., Benlian, A., & Wiesböck, F. (2020). Options for formulating a digital transformation strategy. In *Strategic information management* (pp. 151-173). Routledge.
- Heyd, T. (2021). Tertiary orality? New approaches to spoken CMC. *Anglistik*, 32(2), 131-147.
- Hussein, N. O., & Elttayef, A. I. (2017). The effect of using authentic materials on developing undergraduate EFL students' communicative competence. *Retrieved October, 34*, 2019.
- Hussein, N., & Albakri, I. (2019). Iraqi learners' problems in learning speech act of request in EFL classroom. *Journal of Education and Practice*. ISSN, 2222, 1735.
- Jabber, K. W. (2020). Speech acts of genuine invitations in iraqi arabic: A socio-pragmatic study. *Misan Journal of Academic Studies*, 19(38), 213-233.
- Kane, G. C., Alavi, M., Labianca, G., & Borgatti, S. P. (2014). What's different about social media networks? A framework and research agenda. *MIS quarterly*, 38(1), 275-304.
- Karamalak, O. A., & Pozhidaeva, E. V. (2019). Linguistic and cultural aspects of relationship status on Facebook and V Kontakte. *Heliyon*, 5(11).
- Kenrick, D. T., Griskevicius, V., Neuberg, S. L., & Schaller, M. (2010). Renovating the pyramid of needs: Contemporary extensions built upon ancient foundations. *Perspectives on psychological science*, 5(3), 292-314.
- Khalaf, Yasmeeen Mohamed Rezk Ahmed Khalaf. 2019. "A Pragmatic Analysis of the Language of Facebook Posts and Status Updates." 40-1:(8)1 *الآداب في العلمى البحث مجلة*
- Koester, Almut Josepha. "The performance of speech acts in workplace conversations and the teaching of communicative functions." *System* 30, no. 2 (2002): 167-184.
- Kokkinos, C. M., & Saripanidis, I. (2017). A lifestyle exposure perspective of victimization through Facebook among university students. Do individual differences matter? *Computers in Human Behavior*, 74, 235-245.
- Kovacs, T. (2021). A survey of American speech-language pathologists' perspectives on augmentative and alternative communication assessment and intervention across language domains. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 30(3), 1038-1048.
- Kunc, N. (1992). The need to belong: Rediscovering Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
- Kwon, M. W., D'Angelo, J., & McLeod, D. M. (2013). Facebook use and social capital: To bond, to bridge, or to escape. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 33(1-2), 35-43.

- Lee, S. Y., & Atkinson, L. (2019). Never easy to say “sorry”: Exploring the interplay of crisis involvement, brand image, and message appeal in developing effective corporate apologies. *Public Relations Review*, 45(1), 178-188.
- Maslow, A. H. (1958). A Dynamic Theory of Human Motivation.
- Meinl, M. E. (2013). Electronic complaints: an empirical study on British English and German complaints on eBay (Vol. 18). *Frank & Timme GmbH*.
- Mey, J. (1993). *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd..
- Mohamad, A., Rashid, R. A., Yunus, K., Abdul Rahman, S. B., Darus, S., Musa, R., & Mat Teh, K. S. (2017). Discourse analysis on newspaper reports of apostasy cases. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 16(48), 96-111.
- Mohamad, A., Rashid, R. A., Yunus, K., Rahman, S. B., Darus, S., Musa, R., & Teh, K. S. (2018). Speech acts in the Facebook status updates posted by an apostate. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(4), 226.
- Mohamad, M., Ali, M. M., Ismail, R., & Lias, S. M. (2017). Ex-Muslims and Freedom of Religion in Malaysia: A Legal and Anthropological Analysis. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, 5(2), 8-17.
- Mohammed, A. A. M. (2020). Investigating the Use of the Speech Act of Invitation by Iraqi EFL Non-Departmental Students. *مجلة جامعة بابل للعلوم الانسانية*, 28(6), 13-26.
- Mohanlal, S., Sharada, B. A., Fatihi, A. R., Gusain, L., Bayer, J. M., Ravichandran, S. M., ... & Thirumalai, S. (2013). A speech act analysis of status updates on Facebook: The case of Ghanaian university students.
- Montag, C., Sindermann, C., Lester, D., & Davis, K. L. (2020). Linking individual differences in satisfaction with each of Maslow's needs to the Big Five personality traits and Panksepp's primary emotional systems. *Heliyon*, 6(7).
- Nesrine, G., Sara, L., & Belhadi, S. (2019). Computer mediated communication and vocabulary learning: The case of Facebook. *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature*, 6(2), 98-116.
- Odoh, P. O., & Ugwu, F. O. (2018). Examining the Relationships between Perceived Social Presence, Narcissism, Gender and Frequency of Text Messaging. *Journal of Psychology and Sociological Studies*, 2(1).
- Rasheeda, N. J. (2020). A pragmatic analysis of the speech act of request among Iraqi EFL students. *language*, 12(12).
- Raza, S. A., Qazi, W., Shah, N., Qureshi, M. A., Qaiser, S., & Ali, R. (2020). Drivers of intensive Facebook usage among university students: An implications of U&G and TPB theories. *Technology in Society*, 62, 101331.
- Rosari, M. (2020). The Speech Act of Request in Computer-Mediated Communication. *Deskripsi Bahasa*. 3. 1-8. 10.22146/db.v3i1.395.
- Rozgonjuk, D., Davis, K. L., & Montag, C. (2021). The roles of primary emotional systems and need satisfaction in problematic Internet and smartphone use: a network perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 709805.
- Santa María, L., Aliagas, C., & Rutten, K. (2022). Youth's literary socialisation practices online: A systematic review of research. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 34, 100628
- Sariyska, R., Lachmann, B., Cheng, C., Gnisci, A., Sergi, I., Pace, A., ... & Montag, C. (2018). The motivation for Facebook use—Is it a matter of bonding or control over others?. *Journal of Individual Differences*.

- Schreiner, M., Fischer, T., & Riedl, R. (2021). Impact of content characteristics and emotion on behavioral engagement in social media: literature review and research agenda. *Electronic Commerce Research*, 21, 329-345.
- Searle, J. (1979). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, B. (2003). The use of communication strategies in computer-mediated communication. *System*, 31(1), 29-53.
- Stangl, F. J., Riedl, R., Kiemeswenger, R., & Montag, C. (2023). Negative psychological and physiological effects of social networking site use: The example of Facebook. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1141663.
- Statista. (2022a). Average daily time spent on selected social networks by adults in the United States from 2017 to 2022, by platform (in minutes). Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/324267/us-adults-daily-facebook-minutes/> [Accessed November 28, 2022].
- Statista. (2022d). Number of monthly active Facebook users worldwide as of 3rd quarter 2022 (in millions). Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/> [Accessed November 28, 2022].
- Sun, Y., Wang, G., & Feng, H. (2021). Linguistic studies on social media: A bibliometric analysis. *Sage Open*, 11(3), 21582440211047572.
- Teo, T. (2016). Modelling Facebook usage among university students in Thailand: the role of emotional attachment in an extended technology acceptance model. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 24(4), 745-757.
- Tsoumou, J. M. (2020). Analyzing speech acts in politically related Facebook communication. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 167, 80-97.
- Tuhai, O. (2022). Typological peculiarities of illocutionary speech acts: a historical perspective. *Cogito-Multidisciplinary research Journal*, (3), 266-294.
- Turki, H. Y., Juma'a, Q. H., & Al-Kubaisy, A. A. (2020). A Cross-Sectional Study of Refusal Speech Act Used by Iraqi Undergraduate Students: of English in Relation to the Academic Level. *Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 166-173.
- Zhao, L., Lu, Y., Wang, B., Chau, P. Y., & Zhang, L. (2012). Cultivating the sense of belonging and motivating user participation in virtual communities: A social capital perspective. *International Journal of Information Management*, 32(6), 574-588.