

Gendered use of language in Facebook status updates among Jordanian and American youths: A sociopragmatic study

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Abstract

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The study examines the types of speech acts of Facebook status updates that are posted by Jordanian and American youth. The participants were from Yarmouk University which is located in northern Jordan and from West Virginia University which is located in the US. The data was elicited from 50 American males, 50 American females, 50 Jordanian males, and 50 Jordanian females. Searle's taxonomy was used to do the content analysis of the data. Searle's taxonomy and additional speech acts were found: directive, expressive, assertive, God's invocation, humor, and quotation. The findings of the study indicate that the religious and cultural background of the Jordanian students tremendously affects their linguistic choices when it comes to writing status updates on Facebook as opposed to the American students. The only similarity found in the results of the study was between American female students and Jordanian female students. Both female groups have the highest percentage of using expressive speech acts.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

Facebook is considered one of the largest social networking sites (SNSs). It is a free social networking website that allows its users to connect with each other by posting texts, pictures, and videos. It allows anyone to create an account for free to interact and build relationships with other people. It also has a feature called news feed. It is an update feature which allows users to publish their life events, important information, thoughts, or whereabouts with their friends. They can share texts, pictures, and videos. Users can specify who can see the posts they publish. Moreover, users can edit the posts after they publish them. The other users who can see the posts can react to them by pressing the like button or commenting on them.

In 2016, Facebook Company edited the Facebook like button. The company enabled the users to interact on status updates with reactions; namely, the users can long-press on the like button to choose one of the following options: "wow", "love", "haha", "sad", or "angry". Facebook allows its users to update their status anytime, and these statuses reflect their feelings and views. Many speech acts may be uncovered when analyzing these spontaneous statuses (Androutsopoulos, 2014). Furthermore, a number of studies used Facebook to examine the social phenomena, and these studies claimed that Facebook is like a culture, and when someone studies it, they study culture (Banikalef & Al Bataineh 2017; Androutsopoulos 2014; Das & Sahoo, 2011; Ilyas & Khushi 2012).

Recently, a series of studies began conducting more research on different fields by using Facebook like second language acquisition (Irwin, Ball, Desbrow, & Leveritt, 2012; Grosseck, Bran, & Tiru, 2011; Tudini, 2010; Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010) identity construction (Laffond & Mossler, 2013; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008; Bachrach, Kosinski, Graepel, Kohli, & Stillwell 2012), and social interaction (Lampe, Vitak, Gray, & Ellison, 2012; Li, Chen, & Popiel, 2015; Indian & Grieve, 2014; Akyildiz & Argan, 2012).

A number of previous researches such as Aydin (2013); Nartey (2013); and Egner (2002) used Speech Act Theory which Malmkjaer (2010) defines as a subfield of pragmatics that studies how words are used not only to present information but to carry out actions. Carr, Schrock, and Dauterman (2012) studied the Speech Act Theory and they claimed that “from a constructionist perspective, not only does communication influence action, but communication also creates the reality and contexts in which individuals exist and interact” (p.4). Therefore, it is possible to study individuals through the messages they produce. One means of conducting such studies is through speech acts. Other research used other taxonomies to examine the data collected from SNSs like Facebook. This research was conducted in places in the world like Europe (Carr, Schrock, & Dauterman, 2012), Africa (Nartey, 2013) and Asia (Ilyas & Khushi, 2012). Little research was conducted in Jordan about the speech acts in Facebook status updates. Most of the research regarding the speech acts in Jordan was conducted by investigating the cross-linguistic or interlingual of a particular act of speech (Banikalef and Al Bataineh 2017). A number of previous research in Jordan focused on sociolinguistics and pragmatics in different contexts such as the sociolinguistic change in an expanding urban context (Khatib Mahmoud Abed Ahmed, 1988), language and gender differences in Jordanian spoken Arabic (Al-Harashseh, 2014), and analysis of humor in Jordanian Arabic among young Jordanians Facebookers based on the

speech acts (Banikalef, Maros, and Ashinida Aladdin, 2014). Some of the prior research in the USA focused on gender identity and lexical variation in social media (Bamman, D., Eisenstein, J. and Schnoebelen, T. 2014), the prediction of age and gender in online social networks (Peersman, Daelemans, and Varenebergh, 2011), and the performance of Speech Acts in workplace conversations and the teaching of communicative functions (Koester, 2002). The data of the previous studies conducted in Jordan and the US showed that Jordanians tend to be less humorous and more religious than any of the other studied cultures. This is due to the bad financial status that Jordanians struggle with and the blood shedding of innocent people in the countries around Jordan (Al-Harabsheh, 2014; Banikalef, Maros, and Ashinida Aladdin, 2014; Banikalef and Al Bataineh 2017). Little or no study compared the speech acts of young Jordanians (YJs) and young Americans (YAs) by investigating the speech acts through the content of Facebook status update. Thus, this study fills a current gap in the Jordanian American sociopragmatic literature by comparing the speech acts of both YJs and YAs who are between 18-24 years old for both genders by using their Facebook status updates.

It has been claimed by some research that when we study speech acts in a specific context, it can provide us with much knowledge about the social structure of the target community. Banikalf and Al Bataineh (2017) argued that “a person’s behavioral intention (and ultimately action) is a reflection of the person’s attitudes and social norms about that behavior. Consequently, these status messages may reflect users’ views and feelings, or allow them to share the activities they care about with each other every time” (p.265). Therefore, the current study will examine the socio-pragmatic and cultural values inherent in the speech act of YJs and YAs Facebook users for both genders based on Searle's (1969) taxonomy.

This study will help to better understand the sociolinguistics of both YJs and YAs. This understanding will enable us to be aware of the users' attitude as individuals of a society defined by their common beliefs (Banikalef & Al Bataineh, 2017; Brooks, 1997; Tu & Corry, 2002). Because Facebook helps particularly young people to build their identities by sharing features of their personalities, youths are chosen to be the whole part of this study (Corry, 2002; Banikalef and Al Bataineh, 2017).

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Theoretical Framework

People use language to express their feelings and even to start arguments to achieve their goals. All of these acts can be called speech acts since they are done in the process of speaking. Language use, intention of speaker, and interaction in a social context should be taken into account when it comes to study the speech acts (Ilyas & Khushi 2012; Sadock 2009). Although the term 'speech acts' may be broad, the only goal of these acts is to comprehend the way people use language to communicate and create meaning through it, and particularly to explore purposes of their usage of language (Carr, Schrock, & Dauterman, 2012).

Searle (1969) believes that speakers usually mean what they say; namely, the literal use of language. He claims that the behaviors are considered as rule-governed forms, and they are illocutionary acts that constitute the main unit of human linguistic communication. Searle (1969) taxonomy is the only taxonomy that classifies speech acts into categories. It is considered to serve as a model to all mentioned studies such as Ilyas & Khushi (2012), Banikalef & Al Bataineh (2017), Nartey (2013), and Carr, Schrock, and Dauterman (2012). It is widely accepted because it categorizes speech acts depending on their illocutionary purposes; that is, how the speaker's utterance fits in the world, their propositional content, and their expressed

psychological state (Carr, Schrock, & Dauterman, 2012). The aforementioned studies added new speech acts to the taxonomy such as quotation, humor, and God's invocation because these acts appeared in the findings (Ilyas & Khushi, 2012). For the current study, Searle's taxonomy will be used in addition to the other speech acts found in the aforementioned studies to analyze the data. Searle classified the speech acts into five main categories:

- 1- Assertive acts: they make the viewer believe something being the case implicitly or explicitly. These acts include informing, reporting, asserting, concluding, and predicting (e.g. it is snowing).
- 2- Directive acts: They are employed to make the receiver to perform an action (e.g. open the door).
- 3- Commissive speech acts: The speakers commit themselves to do something in the future (e.g. I promise I will do better in the midterm) (Ilyas and Khushi 2012). These acts include refusing, promising, vowing, volunteering, and offering.
- 4- Expressive acts: these acts express the way speakers feel about the situation around them (e.g. I am sorry for your loss). These acts can be dislikes, pleasure, pain, sorrow, likes, and joy.
- 5- Declarative acts: they change the state of the world in an immediate way (e.g., I pronounce you husband and wife) (Nartey 2013).

In previous studies, new speech acts were found in social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter; these include quotations, humor, and God's invocations (Chandler, J., Salvador, R. and Kim, Y. 2018; Ilyas and Khushi 2012; Banikalef & Al Bataineh 2017; Nartey 2013; Nastri et al. 2006; Banikalef 2019; Carr n.d., 2017). The following section defines each one:

- 1- Speech acts of quotations: Banikalef and Al Bataineh (2017) defined this speech act as "the form of speech that occurs when the utterance is not originally produced by the speaker"(p275). This speech act includes poems, Quranic verses, Biblical verses, wisdoms, song lyrics, quotes, and holy Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (e.g., “when you doubt...how you were created...you doubt an energy greater than us both irreplaceable – Rupi Kaur”)
- 2- Speech acts of humor: Lynch (2002) claimed that a humorous message is a type of message that has been interpreted, intentionally or unintentionally, as funny. Some previous sociolinguistic studies stressed the importance of humor in serving as an essential social function on Facebook and other social sites (e.g., me during reasonable hours of the day: I never want to do anything in my life. Me at 3 Am: I want to learn how to play piano immediately. LMAO) (Carr et al., 2012; Banikalef, 2014; Nastri, Peña, & Hancock, 2006).
- 3- Speech acts of God's invocation: the relationship of language and religion is one of significant areas of study in sociolinguistics since religion has a major effect on society (Al-Haj Eid, 2019). This relationship is undeniable since language shapes culture and reflects religion (Al-Haj Eid, 2019). Davis (2013) states that language and religion have a strong relationship with each other in direct ways leading to the existence of bilingual language. He claims that when both language and religion join together, a religious language appears. Religious language is a special way of communication used specifically in some situations (Donvan, 1976).

Since the speech act of God's invocation is a religious one, it should immensely appear in the culture where religion is deeply rooted in it. In some of the research papers conducted on Facebook status updates in the field of pragmatics in the Middle East, a new speech act found in the status updates; that is, God's invocation (Aljasir et al. 2017; Banikalef 2019; Banikalef and Al Bataineh 2017). However, this speech act was not found in the western research, such as the article written by Carr (2012), regarding status updates on Facebook. This is due to the fact that "such utterances have been hindered by the descriptive fallacy, and such utterances have been regarded as assertions or descriptions, and philosophers of religion have been in the very difficult position of trying to describe the facts asserted by such locutions" (Harris, 1980, p.4). This speech act includes Quranic verses, Biblical verses, and making requests for Almighty God (e.g., the sisters are like beautiful stars in the sky. Oh God, I ask you to keep my stars). Aljasir (2017) suggested that "religious writings online reflect users' personal missions: they provide a prophetic voice, define their faith, introduce others to the relevance of users' faith, and engage friends and strangers in a religious discussion" (p.84). Pew Internet and American Life Project (2012) conducted a study to see the percentage of people in the Middle East that consider the Islamic religion as important elements to their life, and they found that 69% of Middle Eastern citizens considered the Islamic religion as of paramount importance to them. Aljasir (2017) analyzed the status updates of a group of Saudi students, and he figured out that God's invocation speech act ranked third in the results of his study. All of the Saudi statuses that included God's invocation speech act covered many subjects ranged from defense of the Prophet Mohamed, references to life after death, prayers, to Quran verses and Prophet Mohamed quotes.

The new speech acts need to be introduced in the taxonomy because of the differences between Arabic and English. English and Arabic are totally different languages. For example, Arabic is read from right to left; on the other hand, English is read from left to right. When it comes to Arabic, it is the official language in Jordan. Jordanians use religious words in their speech because of the fact that Arabic was influenced by the Holy Quran (Al-Haj Eid, 2019). This supports the fact that Islamic religion is deeply rooted in the identities of the Jordanian people (Banikalef & Al Bataineh, 2017). On the other hand, English language is “a West Germanic language that originated from Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain in the mid 5th to 7th centuries AD by Anglo-Saxon migrants” (History of English, n.d.). According to previous research, friendship, religion, and family cohesions are important values to West Virginians (Lewis & Billings, 1997). Coyne, Demian-Popescu, and Friend (2006) studied Social and Cultural Factors Influencing Health in Southern West Virginia, and they examined the social factor, religion, and faith in God among West Virginians. The participants were ten focus groups; five were composed of men, and five were composed of women. The researchers claimed that “faith appears to be a traditional value that has been carefully passed down from one generation to another.... in West Virginia” (p4). The participants in their study indicated that they believe in deep religious faith which has its origin when West Virginia was settled. Those participants considered themselves being in “the Bible belt”. “Religious beliefs and faith in God are important resources when people in this area of West Virginia face sickness and seek healing” (Coyne, & Demian-Popescu, & Friend,

2006, p. 5). Some West Virginians resort not only to medical care to solve their health problems but also to faith (Lewis, 1997).

1.2.2 Speech acts outside social network sites

Miller (2001) claimed that Searle's taxonomy can be applied inside and outside social networks sites. He argued that the speech acts could include promises, lies, excuses, apologies, and declarations. These acts are used by people in the real life, and numerous studies have been conducted outside social network sites (Aydin, 2013; Egner, 2002)

Aydin (2013) compared apology strategies used in Turkish, American English, and advanced non-native speakers of English in Turkey since this expressive speech act is one of the most acts used among Turkish speakers. He collected the data of the study via a discourse completion test (DCT). His test was based on Searle's taxonomy. The participants comprised of 29 native speakers of English, 30 native speakers of Turkish, and 15 nonnative speakers of English in Turkey. He analyzed apologies that are given to the same situations from these three different groups of participants in order to identify and compare the norms of apologizing in Turkish, English, and other languages apart from English in Turkey. He concluded that L1 and L2 interact to a great extent in language learning. Moreover, he concluded that non-native English speakers in Turkey had similarities in their apologies in terms of general strategies.

Egner (2002) looked at the speech act of promising in an intercultural perspective. The data of the study was collected in situated conversational exchanges in which he was either involved

himself, or of which he had found reports. He used the speech act of promising based on its definition in Searle's taxonomy. He compared the speech act of promising between African and Western contexts. The data analysis showed that the African promise differs from the Western one in the way it comes about; i.e., by negotiation of the felicity conditions. On the other hand, for an African speaker, he states that "just stating an intention to perform an act in the hearer's favor does not yet imply commitment or even presuppose ability to carry out the act" (p.10).

1.2.3 Social network sites (SNSs) and Speech acts within Facebook

SNSs are web-based applications that enable their users to do three tasks: 1) create a public or semi-public profile; 2) search for the other available users to be added on their accounts; and 3) view and add available users within the system (Carr, Schrock, & Dauterman, 2012). These emerging SNSs that enable their users to share their feelings and make their networks visible to others have become of interest academically and commercially (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

Facebook serves as a virtual network that allows its users to present themselves in images for others to be observed and interpreted (Reese, Ziegerer-Behnken, Sundar, & Kleck, 2007; Carr, Schrock, & Dauterman, 2012). It has been claimed that the ability to contact the other people on the Internet plays a role in constructing a strong identity and builds more meaningful and strong relationships with others (Turkle, 1995; Walther, 2008). The increasing popularity of the SNSs not only gives us the chance to investigate interpersonal and group relationships online, but also to explore the way people build and hone their identity and interpersonally deal with others in online sites (Donath & Boyd, 2004). SNSs provide their users to communicate via pictures, videos, and emojis. Although SNSs grant a tapestry of sounds and videos, the backbone of communication is still at the message-level (Carr, Schrock, & Dauterman, 2012).

Indeed, there is a dearth of speech act studies on Facebook because of the fact that there are challenges in the analysis to conduct research in Facebook. One status update may have more than one speech act. That means it is difficult sometimes to classify a status update as a directive or expressive speech act as it may have more than one intention in comparison to face-to-face interactions which you can determine the intentions of speakers based on the tone or gestures (Banikalef & Al Bataineh 2017).

A number of studies have used Facebook status updates to estimate the prevalence of different speech acts amongst particular communities (Ilyas and Khushi, 2012; Khalaf, 2019; Nartey, 2013; Carr, Schrock& Dauterman, 2012). They tend to find that expressive and assertive speech acts are most common in Pakistani culture (Ilyas & Khushi, 2012), Egyptian culture (Khalaf, 2019) and American culture (Carr, Schrock& Dauterman, 2012). However, directive, humor, quotation, God's invocation, and commissive speech acts differ between cultures (Ilyas and Khushi, 2012; Khalaf, 2019; Nartey, 2013; Carr, Schrock& Dauterman, 2012)

In a research article about communicative functions of status updates on Facebook, Ilyas and Khushi (2012) examined how identities were established and represented through language by collecting 171 status updates. The sample comprised 60 males and females in the age group of 18-24 years in a Pakistani university. While some of these status updates were classified based on their individual communicative function due to the fact that they were broken into two parts, some of them were taken as one unit. Data analysis showed that expressive speech acts constituted 33.33 % of the overall percentage, followed by Assertive (28.07 %), Directives 18.12%, and Commisives (2.32%). Poetic Verses and Quotation were also found in the data, and they were added to the category. Quotation acts, which constituted 15.21% of the overall percentage, included jokes, epigrams, and quotations. Poetic Verse acts comprised 2.9% of the

overall percentage, and they included poems and some verses from poems. Ilyas and Khushi (2012) concluded that people use Facebook not only to share their feelings and activities, but also to construct their identity.

Khalaf (2019) investigated the communicative functions of Facebook status updates in Ain Shams University in Egypt, and she described the formal features and functions of digital discourse. Ten posts and a number of comments were collected and analyzed based on Searle's Speech Act framework and Grice's theory of cooperative maxims and implicature. The data was collected from males and females in the age group of 21-35 years. Her analysis showed that digital discourse has some characteristics that are classified into formal features, which are related to the form of the post, and functional manifestations, which are associated with the function of the post. What's more, direct speech was used more than indirect speech in the data collected. Some of the functions that were derived from the data include: sermons, prayers, supplications, spreading consciousness among people, greetings, revealing constructed online identities, and addressing target audiences. She concluded that "Facebook language proves that it can be employed as a form of social interaction" (p.36).

Nartey (2013) examined the Facebook statuses of Ghanaian university students specifically in the University of Cape Coast (UCC) by using an online group page created by the students on Facebook. He wanted to explore the speech acts and the communicative functions used in these statuses as he claimed that there was no study that investigated the African setting by using the online language. The participants' status updates were collected from 60 undergraduate students of UCC between the hours of 9:00 and 10:00 a.m., 2:00 and 3:00 p.m., and 6: 00 and 7:00 p.m. daily, for three consecutive weeks. The data was analyzed based on Searle's (1969) taxonomy.

The Searle's speech act theory was used because it concentrated on language use, the intention of the speaker, and the interaction of a social context. Data analysis showed that 35% of status updates were constructed with directive speech acts followed by assertives (23.3%), expressives (21.7%), quotations (11.7%) and commissives (8.3%).

Carr, Schrock, and Dauterman (2012) analyzed the use of speech acts in the status updates of Facebook in computer-mediated communication. 204 status updates were collected. These statuses were posted by 46 random American Facebookers. The data was collected three times daily over 14 consecutive days. Searle's taxonomy (1969) was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that the statuses were most frequently constructed with expressive speech acts, followed by assertives. In addition, humor comprised 20% of the speech acts. Those findings reveal how people express themselves on social media (Carr, Schrock, & Dauterman, 2012).

In conclusion, speech act theory is still these days a better way to analyze the online data due to its feasibility. All of the discussed studies used Searle's taxonomy (1969) to analyze the data. Moreover, status messages of most previous research were most frequently constructed with expressive and assertive speech acts. The current study aims to investigate and compare the speech acts of YJs and YAs by using their Facebook status updates and based on Searle's (1969) taxonomy in order to know their cultural and gender differences. It is expected that the data of the current study will have the new speech acts that were found in the previous research (e.g. quotation and humor), and will also include some of the additional speech acts proposed by other studies. The current study will help us to better understand the cultural and linguistic differences between the Jordanian and American communities by trying to answer the following research

questions: (1) what are the types of speech acts in the status updates posted by young Jordanian and American males and females? (2) How do the culture and society affect the realization of speech acts on all groups? (3) What are the differences of the speech acts between Jordanian and the American youth?

Chapter 2

2.1 Methodology

2.1.1 Participants

In line with the methodologies of Banikalef and Al Bataineh (2017) and Ilyas and Khushi (2012) studies, this current study used samples of students from two governmental universities, namely Yarmouk University, which is located in Irbid city in the north of Jordan, and West Virginia University, which is located in the USA. The number of participants was 156, and they were divided into four groups, namely 32 male students from West Virginia University, 38 female students from West Virginia University, 41 male students from Yarmouk University, and 45 female students from Yarmouk University. The ages of the students ranged from 18 to 24 years old. The average ages of students was 20 years old. Young Americans that participated in this study are not representative of all young Americans. Therefore, it should be noted that the sample of the American students in this study refers to a specific population of Americans, namely young American students who are originally from West Virginia. Previous studies claimed that WV is whiter, poorer, less educated, more rural, and more politically conservative than the country as a whole (Clagg & Martis, 2020; Coyne, & Demian-Popescu, & Friend, 2006).

The abbreviations young Americans (YAs), young Jordanians (YJs), American males (AMs), and American females (AFs), Jordanian males (JMs), and Jordanian females (JFs) will be used to refer to the participants of the current study.

2.1.2 Materials

156 student Facebook accounts were observed. Some of the students are friends of the researcher on Facebook. The other students are from both universities. All students publish posts publicly.¹

2.1.3 Procedure

All of the accounts were observed daily for one month. The observation began on July 1, 2020 and ended on August 1, 2020. If any of the users published a post, it would be classified into its speech act, namely, assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, humorous, quotation, or God's invocation. At the end of the collection period, the number of speech acts of per group was calculated.

2.1.4 Content analysis

In this study, Searle's (1969) taxonomy was used to analyze the statuses of all groups; namely, this study is content analysis based. This taxonomy was used in previous research to analyze online data containing assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts (Banikalef and Al Bataineh 2017; Ilyas and Khushi 2012). Since a single status update could

¹ Among the initial 200 participants, 18 American male students, 12 American female students, 9 Jordanian male students, and 5 Jordanian female students did not publish any posts during the observation period. Therefore, 156 participants participated in the final study.

contain more than one sentence, and a sentence could contain more than one speech act, all posts were categorized into their component messages (Carr & Dauterman 2012). For example, a status update could read, "My team did a bad job today, but, I promise, the team will do better next time". In that status update, there are two speech acts, the first referring to "my team did a bad job today", and the second promising the reader that "the team will do better next time".

If a speech act was found in the data outside the coding scheme (e.g., God's invocation, quotation, or humor), it would be categorized according to its act. Declaration speech acts were excluded from the analysis because they were not made by the participants. However, new speech acts were found and added, namely quotation, humor, and God's invocation. These speech acts are not found in Searle's taxonomy. Furthermore, these acts were found in previous studies (Ilyas and Khushi 2012; Banikalef & Al Bataineh 2017; Nartey 2013; Nastri et al. 2006; Banikalef 2019; Carr, 2017)

The data was observed and analyzed by looking at the regularity of co-occurrence between the statuses and Searle's classification of speech acts. The found statuses were in different forms, namely Arabic, English, and Netspeak languages. The researcher himself was the coder of the status updates, and he accurately matched the statuses with the data, in light of Searle's taxonomy, in order to achieve the reliability of the content analysis (Krippendorf, 2004).²

It should be noted that the comparison between the groups in the study was done between the JMs and AFs, AMs and JFs, and between Jordanian students and American students in order to

² Netspeak is the abbreviations, words, and emoticons that people use when interacting with each other on the Internet.

show the cultural differences between the two communities and to show how males are different from females in posting on Facebook.

Chapter 3

3.1 Results

The Facebook statuses were categorized and analyzed according to the Searle's taxonomy and based on their content. Seven types of speech acts were found in the participants' statuses. The overall numbers of status updates and speech acts in all four groups were 1097 and 1438 respectively, an average of 1.2 per status update. To understand how status messages were constructed at the level of the individual, each status message was calculated by dividing the total number of speech acts by the total number of statuses (see charts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6).

Chart 1: overall status updates

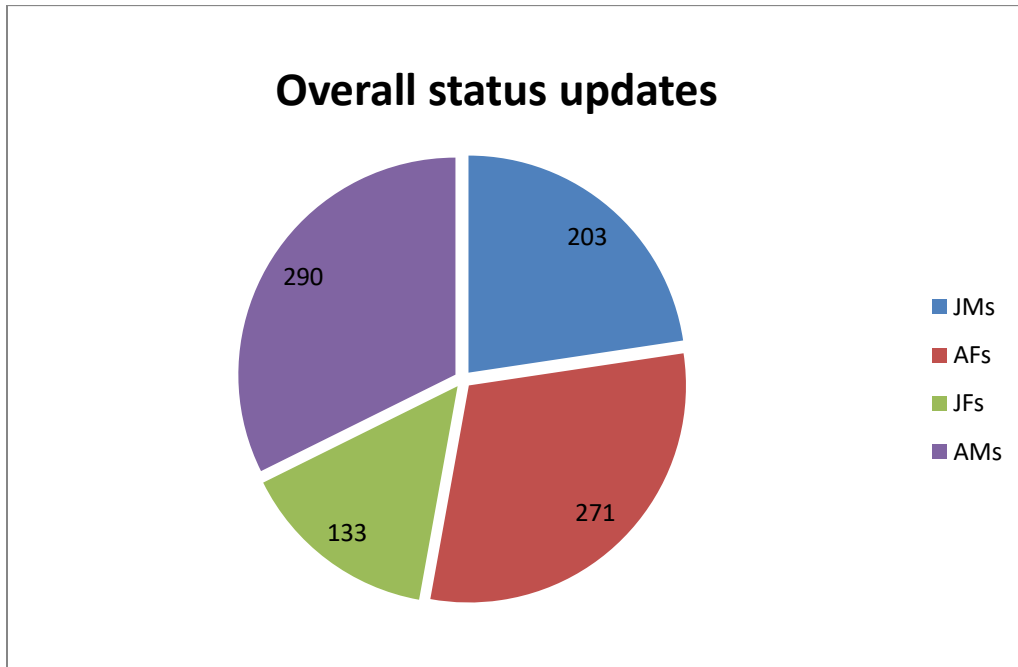


Chart 2: overall speech acts

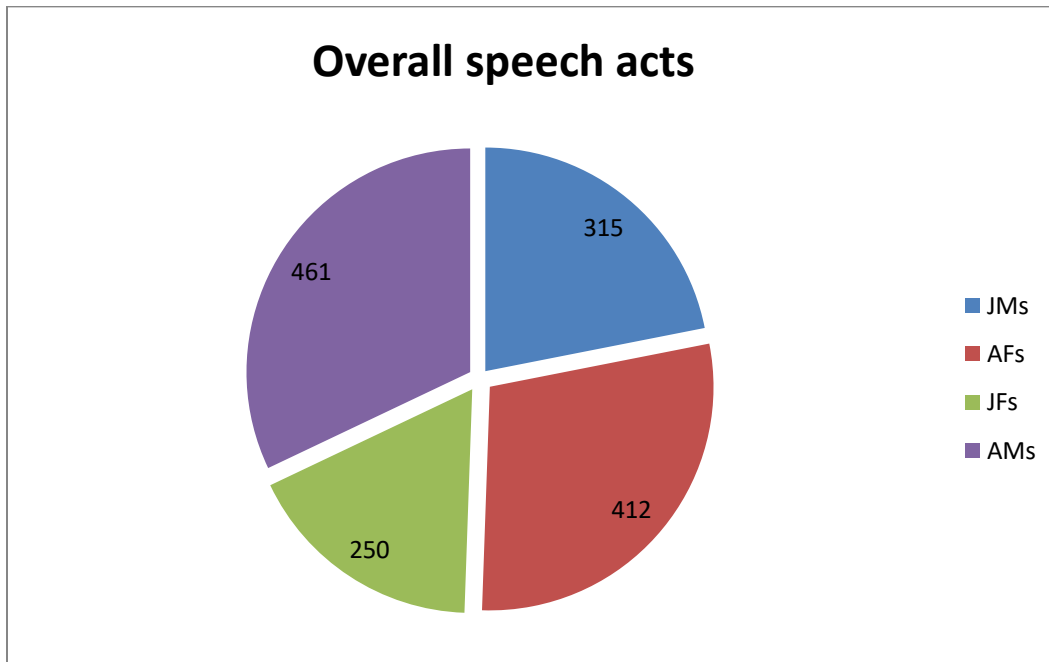


Chart 3: numbers and percentages of Speech Acts within JMs' Facebook Status Updates ³

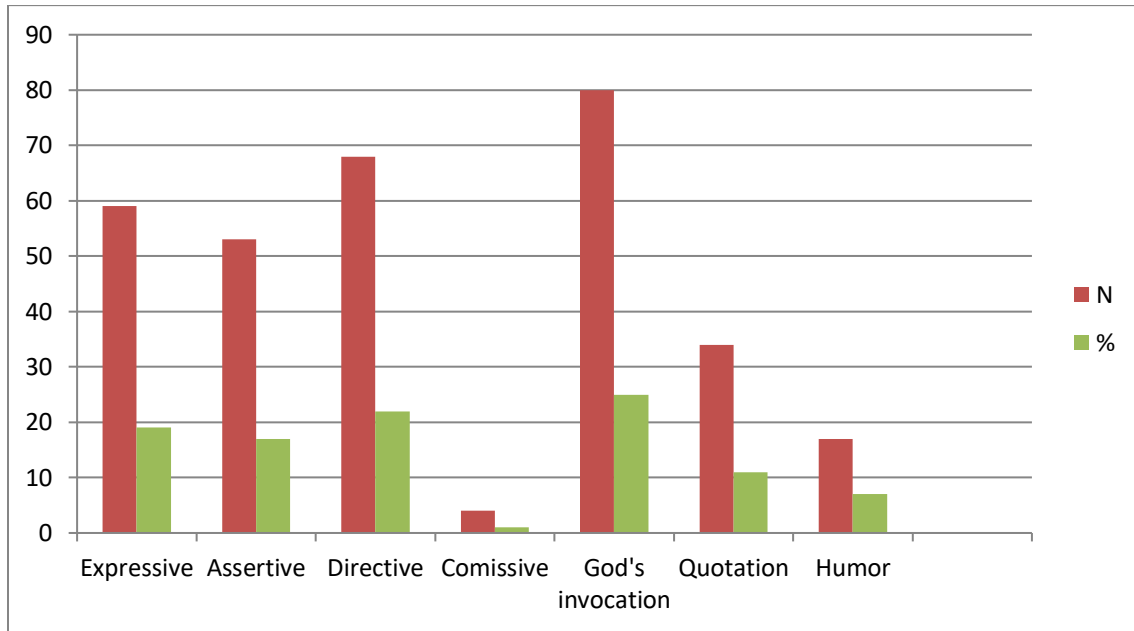
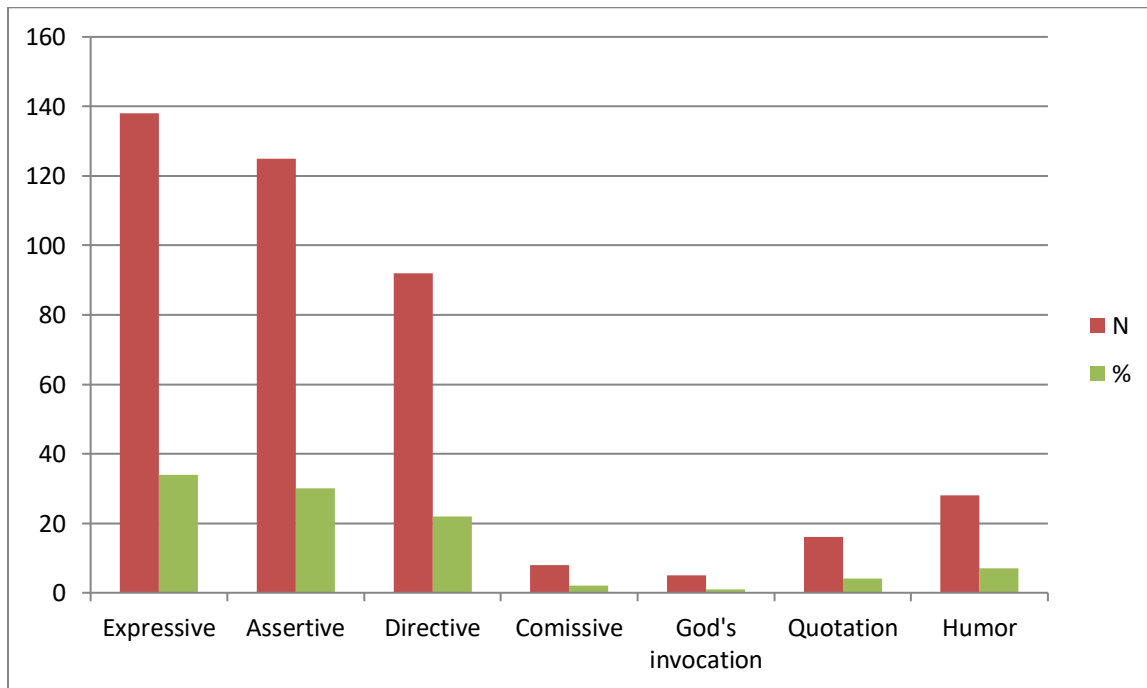


Chart 4: numbers and percentages of Speech Acts within AFs' Facebook Status Updates



³ In charts 3, 4, 5, and 6, the percentage (%) refers to the percentage of the total speech acts produced by that group. N refers to the number of statuses produced by that group.

Chart 5: numbers and percentages of Speech Acts within JFs' Facebook Status Updates

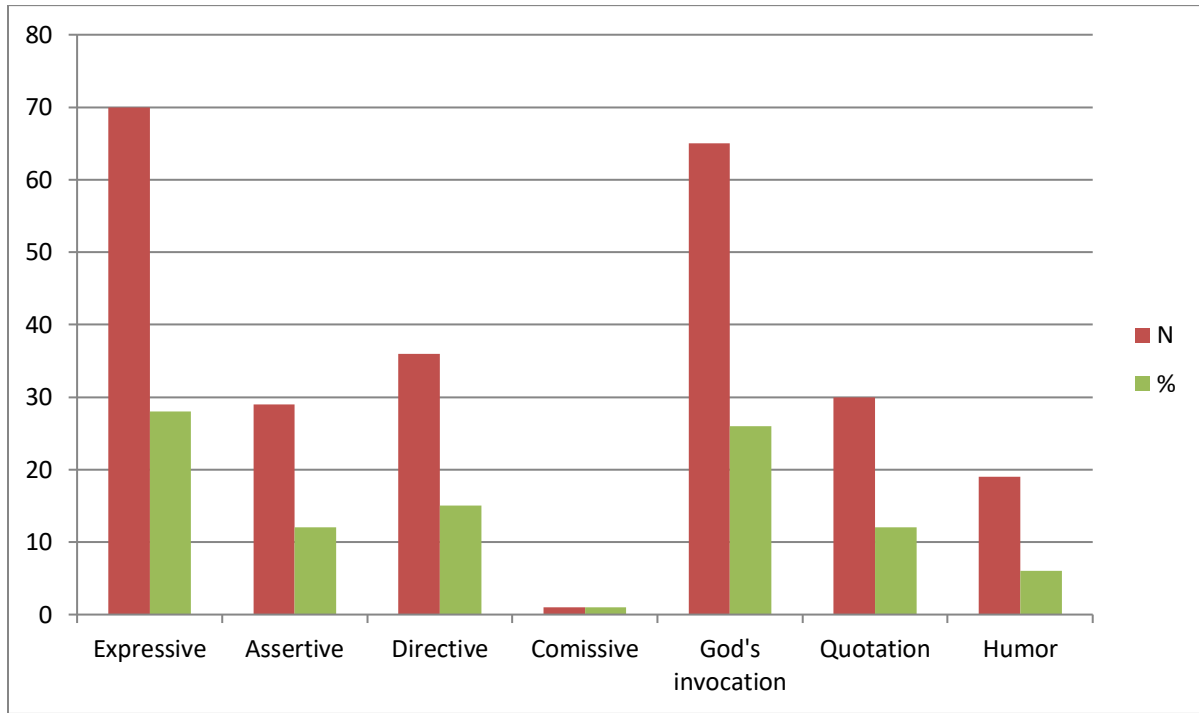
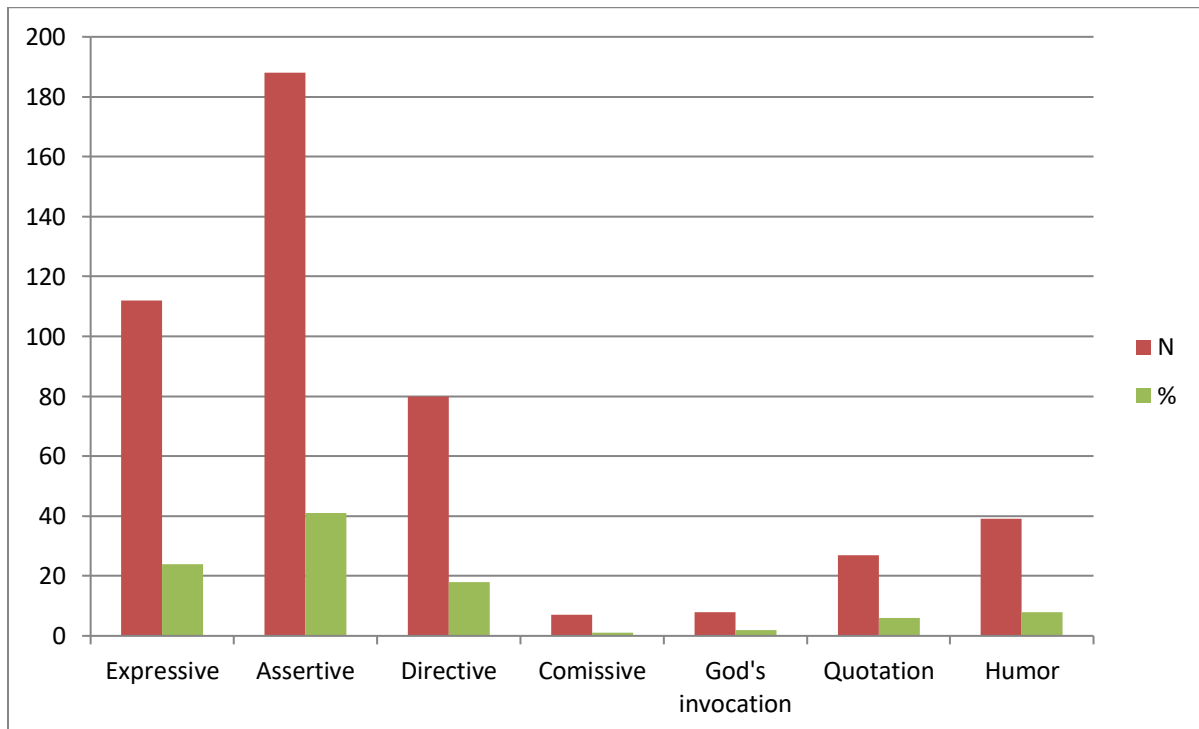


Chart 6: numbers and percentages of Speech Acts within AMs' Facebook Status Updates

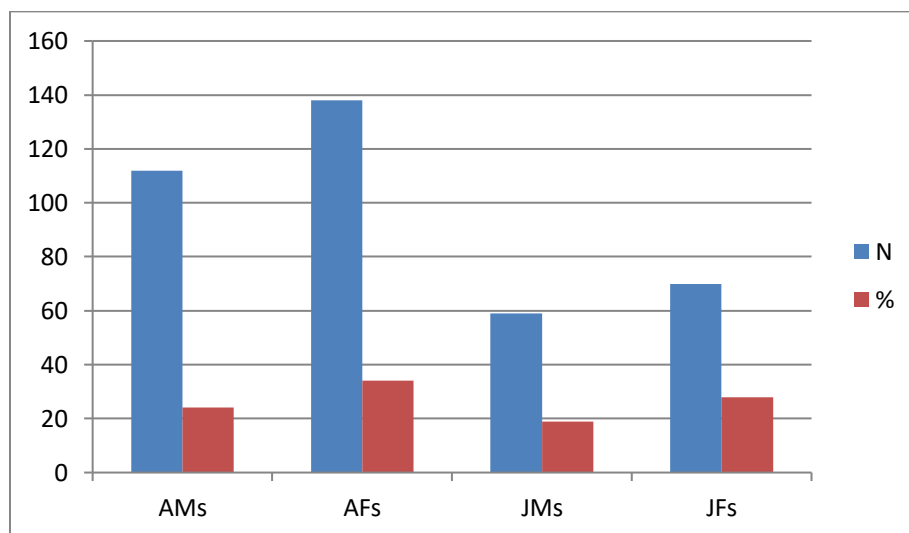


As charts 3, 4, 5, and 6 show, AMs had the largest number of statuses as opposed to JFs who had lowest number. Expressives, God’s invocations, and assertives were the most common speech acts appeared in the data in comparison to commissives, quotations, and humors speech acts which were the less common ones. Females tended to have more expressives than males. Americans produced more assertives than Jordanians. All groups roughly had the same percentages of directives and commissives. God’s invocations speech acts constituted most of Jordanians’ statuses as opposed to Americans’. Moreover, Jordanians quoted in their statuses more than Americans. On the other hand, Americans tended to be more humorous than Jordanians. The following section will discuss the results in detail.

3.2 Speech analysis

3.2.1 Expressive Speech Acts

Chart 1: numbers and percentages of expressives within the statuses of all groups



This act reflects what speakers feel, their physiological state. Nartey (2013) defined expressive speech acts as the projection of the inner feelings of a speaker. These acts can be statements of sorrow, pleasure, likes, dislikes, pain, or joy (Carr, 2017). It appeared significantly in all groups. According to chart 1, American females (AFs) used more expressives than Jordanian males. The percentages were 34% and 19% respectively. In addition, 28% of the Jordanian females' (JFs) statuses were expressives in comparison to American males' (AMs) expressive statuses, which comprised 24% of the overall statuses. This supports the previous research that claims females usually share feelings with others more than males on Facebook (Banikalef, 2019). The current finding also is consistent with the literature given that each of the previous studies reviewed had expressives occurring either in the first or second positions (Ilyas & Khusi 2012; Banikalef et al., 2014; Banikalef 2019; Banikalef and Al Bataineh 2017). The following examples prove that expressive speech acts construct most of Facebook status updates:

- The following examples were taken from the statuses of JMs to express honest emotions:

“كل الشكر والاحترام والتقدير لقسم الرياضيات في جامعة اليرموك ,الاردن ، على هذا المقطع الرائع عن التخصص”

‘All my gratitude and appreciation to the department of math in Yarmouk University, Jordan on this amazing video about the major.’

كل عالم وأنت بألف خير يااا حوووووصتي يا اجدع وافضل فوتوغرافي فيكي يا اريد
عقبال 100 سنة والفرحة بتخرجك وبعرسك يا حب"

' Happy birthday to my best friend and best photographer ever in Irbid. I wish to congratulate you again on your 100th birthday. I wish to see you also graduating and to be a groom, my love!'

- The following example was taken from the statuses of JFs to express honest emotions:

"لم تكن أمي يوماً ما امرأة عادية ، ففي كل المرات التي قابلتني الدنيا بمواقفها الموحشة وجها لوجه كنت أختبئ في ظهر أمي وأطل عليها بكل قوتي وحينما داهمني اليأس حاربت به بأمي ، وفي كل المرات التي حالفتني بها النجاح أتحاشى الدنيا وأهلها وأرى انعكاس فرحتي بعين أمي"

"My mother was not a normal person for even one day. Every time I faced harsh incidents face to face, my mother was supporting me and giving me strength. When the desperation came to me, I conquered it with my mom. When success is by my side, the first person I go to is my mom because I see the reflection of my happiness in her eyes!"

- The following examples were taken from AMs statuses to express honest emotions:

"Welcome to the ***** Cafe -- where the staff is free to decide how your food is handled!

(Thanks Michelle)"⁴

"Thank you all for the lovely birthday wishes! I've been overwhelmed by gratitude today. I'm grateful for a beautiful day in Morgantown."

- The following examples were taken from AFs statuses to express honest emotions:

"Happy birthday to my wonderful, supportive, caring, beautiful, quirky, funny, loving, amazing mom"

"Congratulations to these remarkable young men and women for prevailing through hardship this year."

⁴ The asterisks were used to hide a name.

"This is infuriating. Cases are already spiking in Morgantown and will only get worse with 20,000+ students coming to town, but if we go online, international students will no longer be allowed to stay in the states"



- The following examples were taken from the statues of JFs to express gratitude toward God Almighty:

"وما زلت أتذكر الأيام التي صليت بها من أجل الأشياء التي لدي الآن .. ف اللهم لك الحمد والشكر

على عقد القران."

'I still remember the days I prayed to you for the sake of the things I have now. Praise be to Allah on the marriage.'

"الحمد لله رب العالمين يا ربنا لك الحمد كما ينبغي لجلال وجهك و لعظيم سلطانك سبحانك لا نحصي ثناء عليك أنت كما اثنيت على نفسك .

وینرجع وینقول ما في فرحه مثل فرحة النجاح 
بحب كل حدا كان موجود اليوم  شكرا لانكم خلितو هاليوم ما بينتسى
عيلتي الأعظم للأبد بحبكم"

'All praises to you God. It is praise as befits the Glory of Your Face and the greatness of Your Might... I should say again that there is no happiness like the happiness of success. Thank you guys because you make this day unforgettable to me. I love everybody who was here today. You are the greatest family. I love you!'

- The following example was taken from AMs statues to express gratitude toward God Almighty:

"Got the news today that chemo will be done sooner than we were originally told. Only 4 more treatments instead of 12! Thank you everyone who has kept mom in your thoughts and prayers! All glory to God!"

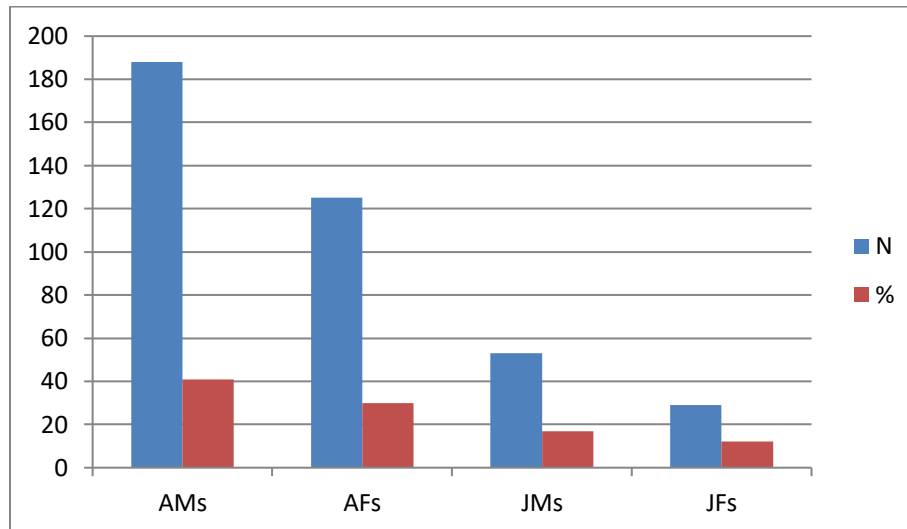
- The following example was taken from AMs statuses to express romantic feelings:

"Move to the other part of the world. Everything will be fears and doubts. But, once you find your soulmate, everything starts to be even better to what you could ever dream."

As can be seen from the previous examples, the statuses of all groups contain expressive speech acts which ranged from expressing honest emotions to expressing gratitude towards Almighty God. Most of the statuses contain emotional, romantic, appreciative, and wishful words. The examples of JMs contain appreciative and wishful words such as "thank you" and "wish you". The statuses of JFs also express honest emotions such as "when the desperation came to me, I conquered it with my mom." The statuses of AMs and AFs contain the same appreciative and wishful words. Moreover, females tend to be more emotional and romantic in their statuses than males. This is due to the fact that females have more expressive qualities than males do (Williams, 1985). This can be seen in the statuses of JFs and AFs. Some of their statuses ranged from expressing emotions towards mothers to expressing emotions towards soulmates.

3.2.2 Assertive Speech Acts

Chart 2: numbers and percentages of assertives within the statuses of all groups



Assertive speech acts indicate the actual state of affairs comprising phrases used to address a specific idea, proposition, or belief (Ilyas and Khushi 2012). The data revealed that AFs used more statuses than JMs to make the viewer believe something implicitly or explicitly like reporting, concluding, and predicting. The percentages were 30% and 17% respectively. This finding indicates that American females do pay more attention to politics and facts than Jordanian males do. The data also showed that assertive speech acts in the statuses of AMs and JFs comprised 41% and 12% of their statuses respectively. This indicates that the plurality of the AMs' statuses are news, facts, and predictions as opposed to JFs' ones. Interestingly, this finding is consistent with previous works such as Carr et al. (2009 & 2012), Ilyas et al.'s (2012), Banikalef and Al Bataineh (2017), and Nartey (2013) where assertives happen to be the first and second most preferred type of speech act. Consider the following examples:

- The following example was taken from the statuses of JFs to assert political issues:

"ارى أن مرض الكورونا اشاعة ومؤامرة والهدف من ورائها جعل الناس مشغولة ببعضها"

'I see that the Corona virus is a rumor and conspiracy, and the goal of it is to make people busy with each other.'

- The following examples were taken from the statuses of AMs to assert political issues:

“*UPDATE- Michael was taken into custody this morning after a brief foot pursuit with police officers.”

"Scientists are scrambling to understand why mitigation efforts were so successful at flattening the curve in California."

"Phoenix protesters have just said we don't respect the curfew but will be peaceful. We'll see what the cops will do"

- The following example was taken from the statuses of AFs to assert political issues:

"Kanye West appears to admit his presidential campaign is being run to hurt Joe Biden"

- The following example was taken from AMs' statuses to assert social facts:

"No matter how far we roam, West Virginia will always be home sweet home"

- The following example was taken from JMs' statuses to assert social facts:

""كلُّ منَّا له طريقة في الحياة، ولكن أينما ذهبنا فكل واحدٍ منا يحمل جزءاً من الآخر"

'Everyone has a path in his/her life. However, wherever we go, each of us carries a part of the other'

- The following example was taken from JFs' statuses to assert social facts:

"وحين تسقط، لن ينتشلك الا اخوتك"

'And when you fall, nobody will help you except your brothers'

- The following example was taken from JMs' statuses to assert religious facts.

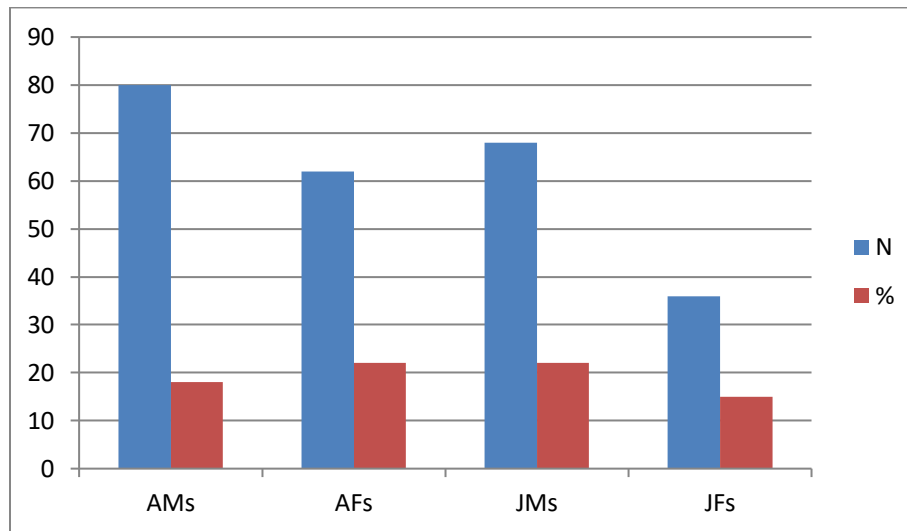
""الدنيا التي تتقاتلون عليها. سيدنا ادم نزل عليها عقوبه. كن مع الله ولا تبالي"

'The life that you are fighting for, Prophet Adam was sent to it as a punishment. Be with God and do not care about anything else'

It can be seen that assertive speech acts ranged from political issues (e.g., “Corona virus is a rumor” and “Kanye West appears to admit his presidential campaign”), to social and religious facts (e.g., “West Virginia will always be home sweet home”, and “The life that you are fighting for, Prophet Adam was sent to it as a punishment”). On one hand, it can be seen in the statuses of political issues that the participants report news to people. Reporting is one of the most common assertive acts that appears on Facebook. On the other hand, the previous examples of social and religious facts have predictions and conclusions. These two acts are considered assertive speech acts according to Searle’s taxonomy (1968). It should be noted that AMs have most of their assertives in politics as opposed to JFs who tend to have their assertives in social facts. Also, AFs tend to assert political issues on Facebook more than JMs.

3.2.3 Directive Speech Acts

Chart 3: numbers and percentages of directives within the statuses of all groups



These acts are used to get the addressee to do something like ordering, commanding, suggesting, and requesting. A content analysis of speech acts found that directives were the third most common act in the statuses of all groups. This finding corroborates Carr et al.'s (2009 & 2012), Ilyas et al.'s (2012), and Banikalef and Al Bataineh's (2017) studies where directives happen to be the third most preferred type of speech act. Based on the data, AFs and JMs have the same percentage in producing directives. The percentages comprised 22% and 22% respectively. This finding that both genders are equal in performing the directive speech act is supported by other research (Carr., 2017). Moreover, AMs and JFs produced roughly the same number of directives in their statuses. The percentages constituted 18% and 15% respectively.

Consider the following examples:

- The following examples were taken from the statuses of JMs:

”الإنسان اللي بمر بتجارب كثير وربنا راضي عليه لازم يترك الدنيا لأهلها“

‘The human being who passes through many experiences and the God is satisfied about him/her; he/she should be care free and look for the Day of Judgment’.

" اللهم إنا استودعناك فلسطين أمنها وامانها ارضها وسماها رجالها ونسائها وشبابها وشيوخها وأطفالها ربي احفظها بعينك التي لا تنام "

'O God, keep Palestine and its men, women, youth, kids, and the elderly safe. O lord, keep it safe with your eyes that do not sleep'

- The following examples were taken from the statuses of AFs:

“Treat people the way you want to be treated. Talk to people the way you want to be talked to.

Respect is earned, not given.”

"Just a reminder that your over-priced mink lashes aren't cruelty free. There are plenty of fake lashes out there that are, please do some research before supporting/buying mink lashes. The only person that needs mink fur is minks"

- The following example was taken from JFs statuses:

" ايام بتمر وساعات ودقائق "

.... الانسان ما بعرف متى بخلص عمره

🙄 فعلا بين دقيقة والثانية يمكن ينتهي أجلنا

🌸 وكل يوم بنسمع عن حالات وفاه في البلدان العربية اغلبهم شباب ومنهم أطفال ف الله يرحمهم جميعا

❤️ خلينا نكون مستعدين لمواجهة ربنا

'Days, hours, and minutes pass! Human beings do not know when their lives will end. Actually, we may die anytime. We hear every day about death cases in Arab countries, and most of them are youth and children. May God have mercy on them all. Let's be ready to see the lord. Please guys forgive me!'

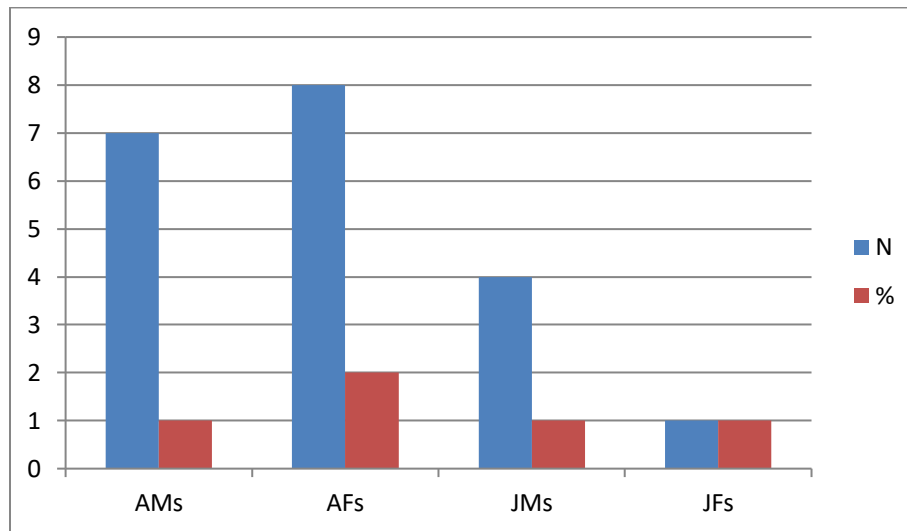
- The following example was taken from AMs' statuses:

"In support of this year's seniors, share YOUR senior picture no matter how old you are. Come on friends; dig out those boxes of memories!! Let's see everyone's pics! Just copy, paste and change your school, year".

As can be seen from the previous examples, all of the statuses contain imperative statements. These imperative statements have different commands ranging from ordering and advising people (e.g., "treat people the way you want to be treated" and "please do some research") to praying for God (e.g., 'O God, keep Palestine and its men, women, youth" and "Let's be ready to see the lord. Please guys forgive me"). These acts are categorized as directive speech acts according to Searle's taxonomy (1969). It should be noted that all groups have the same types of commands. Apart from directive acts, the statuses of JMs and JFs show that these two groups are affected by the conflicts that are around Jordan, namely, the Syrian conflict and Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

3.2.4 Commissive Speech Acts

Chart 4: numbers and percentages of commissives within the statuses of all groups



Commissive is a speech act that commits a speaker to some future actions. This act can be promising, vowing, guaranteeing, refusing, threatening, and volunteering. This type of speech act can be performed by one speaker or a group of speakers (Al-Bantany 2013; Carr et al 2017). “In using a commissive speech act, the speaker undertakes to make the world fit the words (via the speaker)” (Yule 1996, p54). According to the data, all groups have roughly the same percentage (1%). By looking at the data of this study, commissives were among the least used speech act types. This finding is consistent with previous works such as Qadir and Riloff (2011), Sotillo (2012), Carr et al. (2009), and Nartey (2013) where commissives happen to be the least preferred type of speech act. One reason behind the dearth of commissives in all groups' statuses is, perhaps, the students do not find enough urgency in these acts since these acts do not have an immediate relevance (Nartey, 2013). Consider the following examples:

- The following example was taken from the statuses of JMs:

"يوما ما بوعدكم انه رح أكون في المكان الذي أردت دائما أن أكون فيه"

'One day, I promise you all that I will be in the place I have been always wishing to be in'

- The following example was taken from the statuses of JFs:

"#بتعرفوا
ممکن اسامح اي حدا مر بحياتي لحد الان
حتى اللي بحكوا عني أشياء وهيه مش فيه ممكن اسامح
الا هالشخص ولا بعمرى بسامحه"

'You know, I may forgive anyone in my life, even those who say things about me that are not true, except one person. I will never forgive him as long as I am alive.'

- The following example was taken from the statuses of AMs:

"COVID19 is real. And now when you're asked if you know someone who was diagnosed with COVID, you can answer yes. (I purposely kept a political perspective out of this because I didn't want to skew the focus –but I promise there is so much I could write...)"

- The following example was taken from the statuses of AFs:

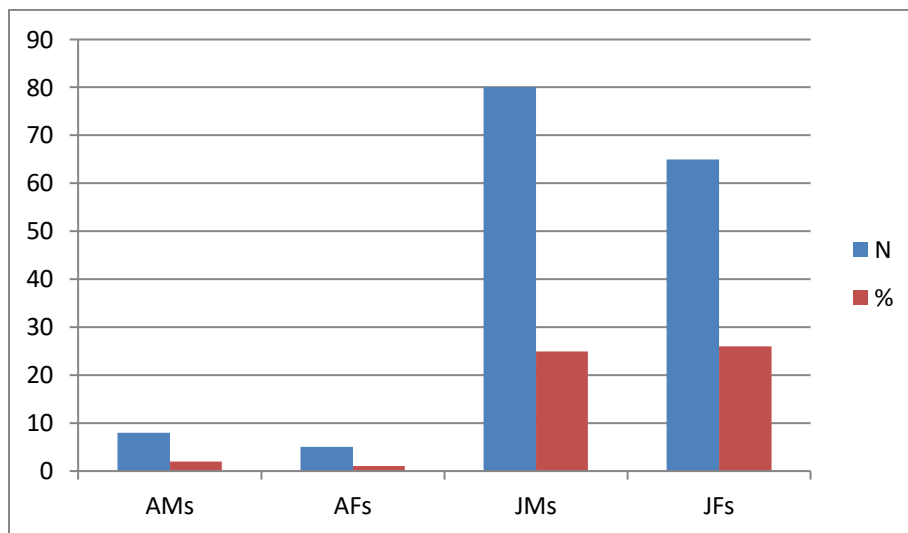
“Conversations will not be cancelled. Relationships will not be cancelled. Love will not be cancelled. Songs will not be cancelled. Reading will not be cancelled. Self-care will not be cancelled. Hope will not be cancelled. May we lean into the good stud that remains.”

As can be seen from the previous examples, all of the statuses contain commissive acts. These acts ranged from promising (e.g., “I promise you all that I will be in the place I have been always

wishing to be in” and “but I promise there is so much I could write”) to vowing (e.g., I will never forgive him as long as I am alive”). It should be noted that all groups have the same percentage of producing commissives.

3.2.5 God’s Invocation Speech Acts

Chart 5: numbers and percentages of God’s invocations within the statuses of all groups



These acts reflect any status that contains requests for something from Almighty God and sayings from Prophet Mohammad and Jesus Christ. JFs produced more God’s invocation acts than AMs who rarely produce them. The percentages comprised 26% and 1% respectively. In addition, 28% of JMs’ statuses were God’s invocation acts in comparison to AFs’ God invocation statuses, which comprised 2% of the overall statuses. Consider the following examples:

- The following examples were taken from the statuses of JMs:

"الاخوات نجوم جميلة في السماء, فيا رب تحفظ نجماتي"

'The sisters are like beautiful stars in the sky. Oh Allah, I ask you to keep my stars'

" من لزم الصلاة على النبي كفي همه وغُفر ذنبه. اللهم صلِّ وسلم على نبينا محمد "

'For the ones who pray for the prophet Mohammad, they will have their worries disappeared and they will be forgiven. God's blessings be upon our prophet Mohammad.'

- The following examples were taken from the statuses of JFs:

" واحشنا يا رسول الله
والله ان القلب اشتاق لك صلى الله عليك وسلم
اللهم ارزقنا زيارة بيتك الحرام مرة اخرى يا رب وتكون مع من نحب وتحب
"مرت احدى عشر سنة عن اخر مره وضاق بنا الشوق اليهما"

'We miss you so much, the passenger of the lord (Mohammad). I swear to God that my heart misses you, peace be upon you. O lord grant us a visit to the sacred house (Makkah) with the ones we love. It was 11 years ago the last time we visited it, and we really now miss it.'

- The following example was taken from the statuses of AMs:

"Got the news today that chemo will be done sooner than we were originally told. Only 4 more treatments instead of 12! Thank you everyone who has kept mom in your thoughts and prayers! All glory to God!"

- The following examples were taken from the statuses of AFs:

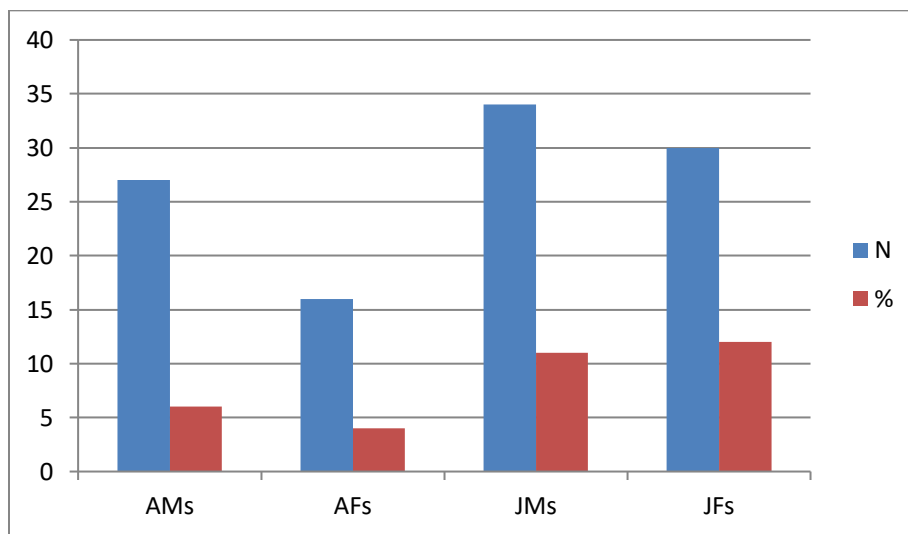
"Extremely convicting. May I and others do better as we learn to love each other as Christ loved us and as Christ calls us to love each other, in action and in word"

"Happy Sunday!! Grow in the Knowledge of Christ and Bloom for Jesus this week!! We are Thankful for Springtime".

According to the previous examples, numerous religious words were mentioned in all groups' statuses such as "Allah", "God", "Prophet Mohammad", "Christ" and "sacred house Makkah". Both JFs and AMs produced God's invocation statuses. However, JFs tend to have religious words that relate to Islamic religion (e.g., "O lord grant us a visit to the sacred house (Makkah)") as opposed to AMs who tend to use religious words that relate to Christianity (e.g., "Happy Sunday!! Grow in the Knowledge of Christ and Bloom for Jesus this week"). The same goes for JMs and AFs. They both published religious words that relate to their religions.

3.2.6 *Speech Acts of Quotation*

Chart 6: numbers and percentages of quotations within the statuses of all groups



These acts reflect the posts which are not originally produced by the addressor. Quotation speech acts are not in the original set of Searle's taxonomy (1968). They are added because they appeared in the statuses of all groups. Any status update with quotation marks was categorized quotation speech act. Most of these acts are poems, Quran verses, famous peoples' sayings, and wisdoms. JMs tended to use more quotations in their statuses than AFs, indicating that JMs

encounter more motivational messages, poetic verse, and famous quotes in their readings than AFs, and they tend to share them with their friends and network members. The percentages comprised 11% and 4% respectively. Moreover, JFs tended to quote poems, Quranic verses, and wisdoms from others more than AMs who tended to quote wisdoms and thoughts from others. The percentages constituted 12% and 6% respectively. A content analysis of the current study found that “quotation” was the fifth most frequently used speech act in all groups. This finding corroborates Nastri et al.’s (2006), Baron, et al.’s (2005), and Banikalef and Al Bataineh’s (2017) studies where quotations happen to be the fifth type of speech act. Consider the following examples:

- The following examples were taken from JMs’ statuses (Quranic verses):

"وقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكَ وَيَا سَمَاءُ أَقْلِعِي وَغِيضَ الْمَاءِ وَفُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ"

‘O earth! Swallow up thy water, and O sky! Withhold (thy rain)! And the water abated, and the matter was ended.’

- The following examples were taken from JFs’ statuses (Quranic verses):

"قل نار جهنم أشد وأحر"

'The fire of Hell is more intense than heat'

- The following examples were taken from AFs’ statuses:

“The universe took its time on you...crafted you to offer the world...something different from everyone else...when you doubt...how you were created...you doubt an energy greater than us both□□□irreplaceable – Rupi Kaur”

“Start over, my darling. Be brave enough to find the life you want and courageous enough to chase it. Then start over, and love yourself in the way you were always meant to be” –Madalyn Beek

- The following example was taken from the statuses of AMs:

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” -Martin Luther King Jr.
Just something to remember..."

- The following example was taken from the statuses of JMs:

" عن أبي ذر الغفاري رضي الله عنه عن الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "ألا أخبرك بأحب الكلام إلى الله. فقلت: يا رسول الله! أخبرني بأحب الكلام إلى الله. فقال: إن أحب الكلام إلى الله، سبحان الله وبحمده "

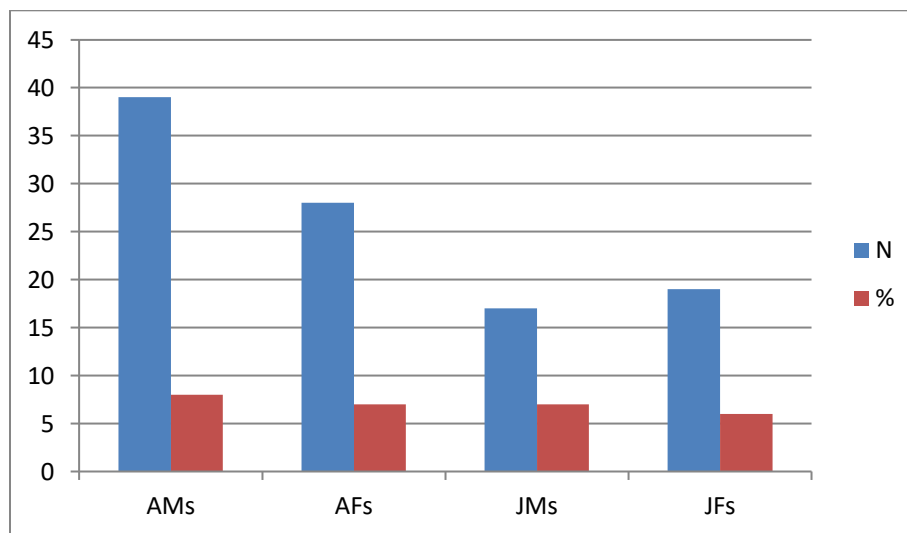
'Abu Dharr reported that Allah's Messenger Mohammed said: "Should I not inform you about the words liked most by Allah (God)? I said: Allah's messenger, do inform me about the words liked most by Allah. He said: Verily, the words liked most by Allah are:' Subhan-Allahi wa bihamdih (hallowed be Allah and praise is due to him)"

As can be seen from the previous examples, JMs tend to quote religious quotes such as Quranic verses (e.g., “O earth! Swallow up thy water...”) and Prophet Mohammad’s sayings (e.g., “Abu Dharr reported that Allah's Messenger Mohammed said...”) as opposed to AFs who tend to quote wisdoms and sayings from famous people (e.g., Rupi Kaur’s sayings). The same is

for JFs and AMs. JFs tend to be religious in their quotes in comparison to AMs who tend to quote from famous people like Martin Luther King.

3.2.7 *Speech Acts of Humor*

Chart 7: numbers and percentages of humors within the statuses of all groups



This act is not found in Searle’s taxonomy. However, given the numerous examples in the data, it is included in the current analysis. It indicates any humorous act performed by the poster of a status update. 8% of AMs’ statuses were humorous in comparison to JFs’ humorous statuses, which comprised 6% of the overall statuses. In addition, AFs published roughly more humorous statuses than JMs. The percentage constituted 7% and 6% respectively. Consider the following examples:

- The following example was taken from AFs’ statuses:

be different in expressing humorous acts in their languages. All humorous acts in the statuses of all groups were jokes (e.g., “You feel that Facebook is to express pain and anxiety. However, when you open the Instagram and Snapchat, you feel that you are in Paris hahaha”) and descriptions of funny situations (e.g., “Me during reasonable hours of the day: I never want to do anything in my life. Me at 3 Am: I want to learn how to play piano immediately. LMAO”).

Based on the data, the American participants tend to use more expressive acts than the Jordanian participants. In addition, the American participants tend to have more statuses that include facts and news than the Jordanian participants (i.e. assertive). The data also indicated that the American participants are more humorous than the Jordanian participants, and this finding is consistent with research that claimed Jordanians tend to be less humorous on Facebook due to the bad status quo that is in the countries around Jordan, namely the Syrian conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Iraqi conflict. Moreover, it is attributed to the bad financial status that most Jordanians have faced in the last couple of years (Banikalef 2019; Banikalef & Al Bataineh 2017). Both American and Jordanian participants roughly use the same number of directive and commissive acts in their statuses. Although West Virginians have deep religious faith in real life, that was not seen in the statuses of the American participants of the current study on Facebook (Coyne, & Demian-Popescu, & Friend, 2006). Previous research claimed that only religious leaders in the western communities are the ones who tend to have religious texts on social media (Cheong, 2014). This may be the reason why God’s invocation speech acts did not appear often in the statuses of the American participants. On the other hand, the Jordanian participants tend to be more religious than the American participants in real life and on social media because of several reasons: first, Arabic was brought affected by the Holy Quran, and that

affected the linguistic choices of Jordanian students in their native language (Darwish, 2012; Banikalef 2019). Second, Islamic religion is a main part in Jordanian cultural heritage, and it is more than a belief to embrace (Anon, 2019; Banikalef, 2019). Third, Jordanians follow the Quran as a guide to a successful life since it covers all principles of human affairs from personal matters (e.g., love and inheritance) to global affairs (e.g., economy, peace, and war) (Al Omoush, Yaseen & Alma‘Aitah, 2012). "Making an invocation and reciting some Quranic verses are common language behaviors deeply rooted in the Jordanian speech community." (Banykalef and Al Batayneh, 2017, p275). Moreover, the Jordanian participants tend to quote more than the American participants on Facebook. Quoting from the Quran and from Prophet Mohammad’s words is a common act used by the Jordanian community and reflected the Islamic identity of Jordanians. This finding is consistent with Banikalef and Marlyna (2013) who found that the quotations of Quranic verses are deeply rooted in the Jordanian identity. The quotations that were made by the American participants were different from that of the Jordanian ones. They ranged from motivational and inspirational quotes to life ones. This finding corroborates Carr, Schrock, Dauterman’s (2012) study where quotations of Americans tend to be wisdoms and sayings of famous people.

There were no declarative speech acts produced by the groups. It is not surprising that no declaratives were produced by the groups because most previous research papers such as Nartey (2013), Carr et al., (2009) and (2012), Sotillo, (2012), Banikalef and Al Bataineh (2017), Banikalef (2019), and Ilyas and Khushi (2012) did not find declaratives in their data. It may be a reason why Zhang et al. (2011), for example, classifies declaratives as miscellaneous. Another possible reason why previous studies find no declaratives in their data is that "declaratives are typically made within institutional or organizational settings" (Nartey 2013, p132). This reason

may explain why the Jordanian and American participants did not produce status updates that have declaratives, since they do not show power relations.

The results of this study advocate the results of other studies that claim social network sites (SNSs) serve as places where people can share their feelings and keep in touch with others (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Banikalef, 2014).

This section compared and identified the speech acts of Jordanian and American youths by examining their statuses on Facebook as a step to better understand the cultural and gender differences between them. Speech acts not included in the Searle's taxonomy were found in the data, that is, God's invocation, humor, and quotation. The Jordanian participants used a significant number of religious words as opposed to the American participants who rarely used religious words. Banykalef and Al Bataineh (2017) claimed that this could be explained by looking at the cultural dimensions of the Jordanian society such as the one made by Hofstede and Michael (2010). According to Al Omoush, Yaseen, and Alma'Aitah (2012), the Jordanian community might be classified as a high uncertainty avoidance culture. This type of dimension indicates the avoidance of ambiguity and uncertainty situations depending on the degree of threat that individuals feel (Banykalef and Al Bataineh 2017). This finding undoubtedly supports the fact that the Islamic religion, that is deeply rooted in the identities of the Jordanian individuals, controls the linguistic choices of their native language (Banykalef and Al Bataineh 2017; Banikalef 2019; Al Omoush, Yaseen, and Alma'Aitah 2012). In addition, Banikalef (2019) stated that "It has been widely recognized that the Arabic-Islamic social culture plays a significant role in the phraseology of constructing Facebook status updates" (p404). West

Virginians tend to be more religious in real life than on social media (Coyne, & Demian-Popescu, & Friend, 2006). This finding is consistent with Cheong (2014) where he found that religious leaders in western communities are the only ones who tend to have religious texts on social media. Based on the analysis, the American participants tended to be roughly more humorous than Jordanian ones. This is due to the fact that “the shedding of innocent Arabs’ blood in other Arab countries such as Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya and Palestine is another reason behind Jordanians’ bad temperament and emotionless behaviors” (Banikalef, 2014, p.9). This can be seen in the statuses of the Jordanian participants that are classified as directives (e.g., ‘O God, keep Palestine and its men’). Moreover, females tended to express their emotions to others more than males (i.e., expressive). Females use expressive speech acts in Facebook status updates as a way to find relationships and strengthen their ties with males by communicating about social problems and current events (Banikalef and Marlyna, 2013). By looking at the analysis of directive speech acts, it can be seen that AFs' statuses are equal to JMs' ones. One of the least speech acts that was used by all groups was commissive act. This may be attributed to the lack of urgency in commissive acts since they do not have an immediate relevance (Nartey 2013). Finally, it can be indicated from the analysis that the Jordanian participants quoted more statements than the American participants. It should be noted that the Jordanian participants usually quote many Quranic verses and Prophet Mohammad's sayings as opposed to the American participants who seldom quote biblical verses and post them on Facebook.

3.3 Conclusion

In this study, the statuses of four groups, namely JMs, JFs, AMs, and AFs on Facebook, were examined by using Searle's taxonomy (1969). This taxonomy was taken as the basis of

this study. The purpose of the study was to find out the cultural and gender differences between Jordanian and American students. Therefore, a comparison between JMs and AFs and between JFs and AMs was done in order to show the differences of using statuses based on gender and culture. After examining their statuses for 30 days, numerous speech acts have been found in the data. The statuses did not show declarative acts. However, new speech acts like the ones proposed by Ilyas and Khusi (2012), Nartey (2013), and Banikalef (2019) were necessary. These included God's invocation, humor, and quotation speech acts. These acts appeared and were used in the statuses of both the American and Jordanian participants. The findings revealed that the most common speech acts that appeared in the data of JMs and AFs were God's invocations and expressives respectively. This is partially consistent with the literature given that each of the previous studies reviewed had expressives occurring either in the first or second position (Ilyas & Khusi 2012; Banikalef et al., 2014; Banikalef 2019; Banikalef and Al Bataineh 2017). The Holy Quran controls the linguistics choices of Jordanians' language since its language is Arabic (Darwish, 2012). Religious leaders in western communities tend to be the only ones who share religious texts on social media (Cheong, 2014). Therefore, the analysis showed that the Jordanian participants used more God's invocations speech acts than the American participants. On the other hand, the most common speech acts that appeared in the data of JFs and AMs were expressives and assertives respectively. This finding is consistent with previous works such as Carr et al. (2009 & 2012), Ilyas et al.'s (2012), Banikalef and Al Bataineh (2017), and Nartey (2013) where assertives and expressives happen to be the first and second most preferred type of speech act. It should be noted that commissive speech acts were one of the least used types of speech acts by all groups. Interestingly, this finding corroborates Carr et al.'s (2009), Qadir and Riloff's (2011) and Sotillo's (2012) studies where commissives

happen to be the least preferred type of speech act. Since this study was conducted within social network sites, it should be noted that the results of this study are consistent with the results of the studies that were conducted outside social network sites such as Aydin (2013) where he found that expressive speech act is one of the most used acts within the social context of Turkish speakers.

It should be noted that females (JFs 28% and AFs 32%) express their emotions on Facebook more than males (JMs 19% and AMs 23%). Moreover, the American participants (AFs 31% and AMs 40%) tended to share facts and political news more than the Jordanian participants (JMs 16% and JFs 12%). Finally, it has been found that the Arabic-Islamic culture plays a significant role in controlling the linguistic behavior of the Jordanian participants based on the current study (God's invocations of JMs 25% and JFs 27%) and Banikalef (2019).

As with almost every study in the field of sociopragmatics, the current study suffers from limitations. The time the researcher collected the data was a time when Covid-19 was spread in the world. This affected the status updates of the participants and biased them to have specific speech acts such as assertives, where participants shared facts and political news about the virus, and God's invocations, where participants pray to God to eliminate this virus. It is expected that the data may show more humorous and expressive speech acts in the normal circumstances

The current study concentrated on Facebook. Nevertheless, future studies can investigate the speech acts on the other social networking sites such as Instagram and Snapchat. Also, the age

groups of this study were limited to those who are between 18 to 24 years old. Future research can examine the speech acts of the other age groups and include more than one thousand participants. It is expected that the results may be different since different ages have different preferences to share on Facebook. For example, Jordanian women who are 50 years old or older tend to be less emotional and more religious than those who are in their twenties.

This study contributes to the current literature by testing the claims of the speech act theory by comparing a community that is culturally different from the American one. The findings of this study gave us an idea about the cultural norms of both communities and how they differ from one another. It's been found also that some of the statuses of the Jordanian youths reflect their religious beliefs.

Finally, the findings of this study could be used as a way for newcomers to easily socialize with young Arabian and American communities by looking at the way young Americans and Jordanians express speech acts in their languages.

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