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Linguistic Economy and Slang as Used by Jordanians on Twitter

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Abstract

In the context of the rapidly expanding technological landscape, social media platforms have become arenas for innovative communication. This study focuses on the linguistic strategies employed by Jordanian Twitter users within the framework of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), considering the concept of linguistic economy. The data for this study were derived from 300 tweets, employing digital ethnography for virtual fieldwork. There were a number of 15 users randomly selected for interviews to further understand their language use on Twitter. Employing the descriptive qualitative content analysis, the following linguistic strategies were found in this study, they are Romanized Jordanian Arabic, code-switching, linguistic economy (shortening, contractions, clipping, and acronyms), and slang (repetition, onomatopoeia, cacography, and capitalization). The prevalence of Jordanian Romanized Arabic and strategic code-switching demonstrated users' adaptability in navigating Twitter's language. The study highlighted the dominant role of linguistic economy within the 160-character limit, with users employing strategies such as shortening, contractions, clipping, and acronyms. Expressive techniques like repetition, onomatopoeia, cacography, and capitalization were identified as creative ways to convey emotions and attitudinal meanings. Overall, this research contributes valuable insights into the developing language dynamics on social media, offering insight into the intricate ways users shape communication in the digital age.

Keywords: Computer-mediated communication, Internet language, linguistic economy, slang, Twitter.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The fact that technology affects our daily communication is noticeable. Specifically, the dramatic leap in communication technology has affected people's everyday lives and significantly changed the way they communicate with each other. Nowadays, with the emergence of several electronic means of communication such as Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, e-mails, and Instagram, language has been affected by the use of such electronic communication modalities. Communication through Twitter, for example, is a mode of communication referred to as Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). CMC can be of two types: synchronous and asynchronous. (Baron et al. 2005; Crystal 2001; December, 1996; Segerstad, 2002). Notably, CMC has made significant changes to the form of written language. This is because the Internet has become an integral part of modern life, and linguists refer to its influence on language and communication. This new genre of language generates the interest of many researchers. More specifically, through a wealth of research, Crystal (2002, 2006, 2008, 2011) was able to revolutionize the realm of methodology and come up with new ideas about this genre. One of his main aims was to present guidelines that could help researchers best tackle CMC. He was also the leading proponent to claim that this new genre comes under the umbrella of Internet linguistics (Crystal, 2006, 2008, 2011).

Several previous studies addressed the form of language used on CMC. However, the majority of these studies were dedicated to examining the form of language used on CMC from certain linguistic perspectives without paying attention to the slang language. More specifically, some studies dealt with this new genre of writing from a sociolinguistic point of view (i.e., Al Alaslaa, 2018; Al-Khatib, 2008; Al-Khatib & Sabbah, 2008; Alshboul & Rababah, 2021; Al-Tamimi & Gorgis, 2007; Dawaghreh, 2016; Samhan, 2017; Zibin & Al-Tkhayneh, 2019). For example, Zibin and Al-Tkhayneh (2019) examined the use of English loanwords inflected with Arabic morphemes as used by Jordanians on Facebook from a sociolinguistic perspective. They indicated that participants' gender and socioeconomic status play a crucial role in using loanwords. Similarly, Al-Khatib (2008) handled the form of language used in email by Jordanian students with an emphasis on the notions of code-switching and Romanized Arabic. He attempted to uncover how Romanized Jordanian Arabic is represented and to what extent it approximates Standard Arabic. Al-Tamimi and Gorgis (2007) indicated that code-switching and Romanized Jordanian Arabic are the favorite linguistic choices used by emailers. They also found out that this newly emerging genre of digital communication can be described as a hybrid lingua franca or even a pidgin.

In another study, Al Alaslaa (2018) sought to investigate code-switching and the form of language used on Twitter by Saudis. Twitter users employ code-switching for the sake of introducing formulaic expressions or shifting from comic to serious situations. Alshboul and Rababah (2021) also examined the language functions of emojis as used by Jordanian Facebook users and how emojis are used by both genders. The results of their study indicate that five functions emerged from the data collected: emotive, conative, phatic, poetic, referential, and metalingual. Samhan (2017) explored code-mixing or code-switching used by Jordanians on Twitter in terms of sociolinguistic factors such as age, gender, and education. His study revealed that only age and education could firmly influence the participant's language. Hussein and

Aljamili (2020) analyzed certain semiotic patterns in COVID-19-related memes and caricatures on Facebook and Instagram used by Jordanians. Furthermore, they aimed to demonstrate how humor is employed as a means of softening the grim mood from a socio-semiotic perspective.

It was also noticed that this form of language was studied from a pragmatic perspective. Alshkhanbeh and Alghazo (2022) carried out a pragmatic analysis to explore the criticism strategies in terms of gender as employed by Jordanians on Twitter and Facebook. The results of the study show that both males and females employ criticism strategies in different ways. Males, for example, opt for the use of expression of uncertainty and asking/presupposing. Females prefer to use grievances/complaints to Allah and emojis/pictures. Hassouneh and Zibin (2021) investigated the complaining strategies used by Jordanian Facebook users to see which types of strategies are used more, with an emphasis on the linguistic features of the language. The findings of their study revealed that expression of disapproval or annoyance was the most used strategy by Facebook users while complaining with negative advice was the least. Rababah (2020) investigated the types of speech acts of WhatsApp statuses as used by Jordanians. The results that emerged from the collected encompass six topics: social, political, religious, romantic, personal, and national. Moreover, the types of speech acts used can be expressive, directive, assertive, or commissive. Hamdan (2021) examined the pragmatic functions of the 'like' button when users interact with status updates on Facebook. He indicated Jordanians do not solely use the like button to show appreciation. Rather, the use of this button developed as a graphic pragmatic marker that serves some functions, and illocutions force vary in purpose as it could be approval, admiration, or mockery of a content.

Some studies deal with this form of language from a psycholinguistic perspective concerning social cognitive theory or acquisition theory. Relying on social cognitive theory, Alkhawaja et al. (2020) attempted to analyze tweets to understand people's attitudes toward bank robbery crimes. Findings show that the common public attitude is divided into two categories: mocking the incident or criticizing the government and living conditions in the country.

As there were some fears among language purists, some previous studies (i.e., Abu Al-Assal, 2023; Al-Jarf, 2021) were mainly concerned with the direct effect of this new genre on the language itself. Such studies indicated that this digital way of communication would weaken the users' linguistic competence and performance as they might resist using standard Arabic structure or spelling communication. On the other hand, other studies have focused more on the role played by social media in learning foreign languages (Al-Jarrah et al., 2019; Al-Tamimi et al., 2018; Altakhaineh & Aljallad, 2018; Al Zoubi, 2018; Rabab'ah et al., 2016). Notably, these studies consider CMC to be an effective tool that facilitates learning English language skills.

Last but not least, some studies (i.e., Atoum & Nouman, 2019; Nahar et al., 2020; Samara, 2020) handled the notion of sentimental analysis of social media, especially Twitter and Facebook. Researchers use this technique to identify the polarity (positive, negative) of a certain text using Natural Language Processing techniques. Relying on this technique, people's opinions, sentiments, evaluations, attitudes, and emotions from written language are investigated and analyzed. On the whole, a large and growing body of literature has investigated the form of language used by Jordanians on CMC. However, so far, little attention has been paid to the form of language used on Twitter. In other words, few studies, if any, have examined the slang language on

Twitter as used by Jordanians from a linguistic perspective to show the types of slang used on Twitter. Accordingly, the current study was spawned from the lack of linguistic analysis of the Twitter language as used by Jordanians.

Based on these objectives, the following questions were formulated:

1. What slang and linguistic choices are used by Jordanians on Twitter?
2. To what extent do Jordanians employ the strategy of linguistic economy in their tweets?

This current study then seeks to achieve some objectives; that is to investigate the linguistic choices of Jordanian Twitter users, focusing on slang and language economy strategies. By investigating the intricate linguistic patterns on Twitter, this research seeks to offer insights into how Jordanian users navigate language constraints, economize expressions, and achieve various communicative goals within the distinct online environment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Computer Mediated Communication

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) has been the subject of intense debate within the linguistic community. In other words, the debate about CMC has gained fresh prominence among scholars and researchers as to whether to consider this genre of writing as a spoken or written form of language. Baron (2002), for example, used the vivid metaphor of 'an emerging language centaur, part speech, part writing' to indicate that this genre of language is essentially a hybrid of writing and speech. In the same line of thought, Gee and Hayes (2011) indicated that digital media is an interesting amalgam of the properties of written and oral language. Besides, social media can be seen as informal platforms of communication that can encompass a wide range of slang. On the other hand, Crystal (2001) went beyond the fact that CMC is a hybrid of speech and writing as he believes that CMC encompasses some properties that cannot be found in speaking or writing. Accordingly, he termed CMC as a 'third medium'.

It is worth mentioning that scholars are still divided on the issue of whether CMC threatens or enriches languages (Verheijen, 2017). Some researchers (Baron, 2003; Cameron, 1995; Warschauer, 2007) admitted that this new form of communication presents threats to conventional or standard language practices. On the contrary, researchers like Biesenbach and Weasenforth (2001) ensured the fact that electronic communication places new demands on language that resulted in interesting variations in the written form of language. Similarly, Crystal (2001) indicated that 'language has become expressively richer as a result of the internet'. Furthermore, he added that CMC helps people to get rid of illiteracy.

2.2 Slang

Social media, as an informal way of communication, is replete with extensive usage of slang (Crystal, 2006, 2008, 2011). Green (2015) defined slang as a form of language that consists of informal words and phrases used in informal situations and typically restricted to a given group of people or certain contexts. Such words and phrases are much more common in speech than in writing. Slangs are also elliptical, playful metaphorical, shorter-lived, and vivid (Fromkin et al., 2017; Wolfram & Schilling, 2015; Zhou & Fan, 2013). Slangs represent the linguistic choices used in digital communication. In other words, linguistic choice in CMC is a form of language that refers to a set of linguistic techniques or strategies employed by the users to facilitate the process of writing and serve certain functions. Such techniques may include codeswitching, clipping, abbreviation, and capitalization (Al-Khatib, 2008; Al-Tamimi & Gorgis 2007). It should be noted here that different terms refer to internet slang, such as social slang, chatspeak, cyberslang netspeak, internet-jargon, and cyber-jargon (Barseghyan, 2013; Teodorescu & Saharia, 2015). In this study, the researchers adopted the term 'slang' as an umbrella term to refer to this way of electronic communication.

Craig (2003), for his part, indicated that slang can be identified in terms of four types: acronyms, abbreviations, phonetic replacements, and inanities. Barseghyan (2013) went further and provided a comprehensively detailed classification of the slang as he referred to specific characteristics of the slang. Specifically, he indicated that slang can be recognized in different types such as_capitalizations, punctuation, letter homophones, and other symbols, keyboard-generated icons, smileys, leet (leetspeak), onomatopoeic spellings, flaming (also known as bashing), clipping, shortening (acronyms and abbreviations), compounding and derivation.

2.3 Linguistic Economy

As far as slang is concerned, Androutsopoulos (2011) raised the point that CMC allowed vernacular writing to be prevalent in new areas of practice shaped by various writing styles and norms, and vernacular writing has been afforded more tolerance and visibility than it has previously enjoyed. He also showed that vernacular writing can be identified in terms of main strategies: first, the mingling of written and spoken features. Second, the principle of linguistic economy because of the necessity of speed in such a way of communication as well as constraints on message size. And third, compensatory means for visual cues, intonation patterns, and facial expressions (Androutsopoulos, 2006).

The principle of linguistic economy is brought to the scene because the temporal aspect of CMC can be related to linguistic economy in one way or another. Vicentini (2003) provided a coherent definition of linguistic economy "as the unstable balance between the needs of communication–which are always changing–and natural human inertia, two essential forces contributing to the optimization of the linguistic system" (p. 39). The economical language use in synchronous CMC can be identified in terms of various strategies such as clippings or ellipses where some letters or determiners and pronouns are omitted (Ferrara et al., 1991; Murray, 1990). As a linguistic notion inherent to language, the linguistic economy is mainly concerned with the tendency towards brevity. One of the central tenets of this principle lies in the fact that it seeks co-convenience and the minimum possible amount of effort at the lexical, morphological, phonetic, and syntactic levels.

It is commonly observed that strategies of linguistic economy are widely prevalent in CMC. In other words, there is a growing strong tendency for CMC users to employ and utilize many strategies of linguistic economy to save time and effort while writing. Various scholars and researchers also refer to the reasons behind using linguistic economy. Crystal (2008), for instance, pointed out that users tend to be interested in the linguistic economy for 'Save a Keystroke' in the sense that abbreviating anything that reduces the number of keystrokes is vastly preferable. For his part, Shortis (2007) indicated that CMC users attempt to respell some words in terms of their "technoliteracy" and some constraints of message production besides the consideration of their audience. He added that for the sake of linguistic economy, respellings result in a simulation of spoken language and incorporate kinesthetic and graphical devices.

3. METHODS

The research was conducted by using the digital ethnography method (Garcia et al., 2009), in which 'virtual fieldwork' was performed to gather the research data. Precisely, Twitter Advanced Search was used to collect tweets by setting a filter to show only tweets with the keywords *mansaf* and *alnashama*. To make this study more focused, the Jordanian lexical *mansaf* and *alnashama* were used. The former, *mansaf,* is considered the prototypical dish in Jordan because it is the most distinctive Jordanian dish offered to visitors and guests. This national dish is a symbol of Jordanian culture for generosity. The latter, *alnashama*, a colloquial word in Spoken Arabic in the Levant and Gulf regions, means generous, courageous, and intrepid people who are always willing to help others. It is considered a nickname for Jordanians in the sense that people of the Arab world usually refer to Jordanians and nicknamed them *alnashama.* Using the terms *mansaf* and *alnashama* about the Jordanian culture makes sense for the present study.

It is worth pointing out that the internet contains a huge language corpus (Crystal, 2011; Zappavigna, 2012). Accordingly, to increase the possibility of collecting relevant tweets for the Jordanian context and reduce online data noise, the collected tweets for the current study were limited to those that contained *mansaf and alnashama*. Additionally, irrelevant tweets, including spam tweets containing extensive links or tweets containing less than one word and repeatedly tweeted messages, must be rejected (Yardi et al., 2010). Most importantly, the researchers were keen to collect data produced by a homogenous group of people as the tweets were taken from Jordanian public interactions. Accordingly, tweets by public figures (journalists, politicians, TV presenters, etc.) were excluded from the analysis as it is intended, from the outset, to focus on ordinary Twitter users. By so doing, the data comprised 300 tweets that were written by a homogenous group who shared the same language, knowledge, and cultural background. Users' names were deleted to respect the privacy of those whose tweets were cited as instances.

By and large, the Twitter Advanced Search and Twitter Archiver plugins were used to retrieve 300 tweets containing the keywords *mansaf and alnashama*. Then, by using the clustering method, the researchers removed spam and irrelevant tweets through a manual elimination process. To achieve reliable saturation, relevant tweets were clustered together until a sufficient amount of data was gathered. Based on the views of Craig (2003) and Barseghyan (2013), the tweets have been categorized based on their slang categories, and a final number of them were generated. It is important to mention that several types of slang can be found in one tweet.

As far as content analysis is concerned, a descriptive qualitative method was used to analyze the data. Content analysis is viewed as an analytical approach to identifying specific characteristics in written or visual materials (Ary et al. (2018). In the same vein, qualitative content analysis, according to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), is a method for categorizing, coding, and identifying categories and themes within a structured text data set using a systematic process. In addition, Renner and Taylor-Powell (2003) demonstrated that there are five stages to analyzing qualitative data. First, the researchers tried to understand the nature of the data. To answer the research questions, information needs to be categorized and data to be coded to identify patterns, themes, concepts, ideas, interactions, behaviors, or incidents. In the penultimate stage, connections and patterns were identified within and between categories. Finally, the researchers interpreted the data to draw conclusions.

Before proceeding to the next part, semi-structured interviews were conducted with some Twitter users. The number of account users was 200. The researchers contacted Jordanian Twitter users whose tweets were part of the research data. Fifteen participants were randomly selected to interview with them. Each user was interviewed individually to elicit his/her opinion. Different topics related to functions and the purpose of using slang were discussed with them. This enables the researchers to go deep into the analysis and get more information. Furthermore, the informants' interpretations of the data guided the researchers in further investigation of the study. It should be noted here that the interviews were not determined by certain specific questions. In the course of the interviews, more questions were asked depending on the interviewees' responses. In light of the informant's responses, the researchers developed a more detailed understanding of how Jordanians use this way of communication. It is worth mentioning here that the interviews were analyzed in terms of thematic analysis, which proved to be effective in processing the collected data. Thematic analysis is viewed as a main method to identify, analyze, and report themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4. RESULTS

Throughout scrutiny of the data, it was noticed that the majority of tweets were written in English, Arabic, or Romanized Arabic. The data analysis also showed that Jordanian Twitter users apply different strategies of linguistic economy and slang choices while using Twitter. The following linguistic features were found in this study, they are Romanized Jordanian Arabic, code-switching, linguistic economy (shortening, contractions, clipping, and acronyms), and slang (repetition, onomatopoeia, cacography, and capitalization). These features have been categorized in terms of the linguistic economy and the views of Craig (2003) and Barseghyan (2013), bearing in mind that some additional slang was noticed in this study. However, as a point of departure, data analysis started with Romanized Jordanian Arabic and code-switching as two linguistic prominent features that were prevalent in most tweets.

4.1 Romanized Jordanian Arabic (RJA)

Al-Tamimi and Gorgis (2007) indicated that Romanized Jordanian Arabic (RJA) refers to the colloquial Jordanian Arabic. It is a patois, similar to other varieties of spoken Arabic, which has been developing an electronic system of writing in recent years. It encompasses a hybrid of characters, namely Roman (Latin), that are already used by the English language and also a specific set of Arabic numerals. Having a close examination of the data, it is noticed that RJA is a favorite linguistic choice for Twitter users because it is extensively used by writers. Table 1 shows some examples.

Table 1. Romanized Jordanian Arabic.

No.	Romanized Jordanian Arabic	Use of numbers
1.	yum aljum3a almansaf insha allah	aljum**3**a
2.	mansaf ma3 jameed w la7meh 5rouf	ma**3** la**7**meh **5**rouf
3.	mtw7em 3ala mansaf mn el 2ordon bs hate ale y6bo5	**3**ala y**6**bo**5**
4.	Hhhhhhhh a8wa noo3 btw ana alyom r7 atw'ada mansaf karaki kmaan lol 7aas feki	a**8**wa noo**3**
5.	5als mashi elk a7sn mansaf karaki bs mshn allah ma tz3li	**5**als a**7**sn

It is apparent from the above instances that Twitter users use Romanized Jordanian Arabic efficiently. Specifically, the second example illustrates this phenomenon, as we can see the use of numbers (such as 3, 7, 5) instead of Arabic sounds (ح / خ / ء), respectively.

Interview analysis shows that the use of Jordanian Romanized Arabic lies in the fact that it enables Twitter users to accelerate the process of writing and save time and effort. Another reason has to do with prestigious purposes. This practice shows the adaptability of users in employing alternative representations of sounds, a characteristic feature of Romanized Arabic on the platform. The intentional use of numbers to convey specific phonetic nuances not easily represented in the Roman alphabet demonstrates the creativity and resourcefulness of navigating language on this platform.

4.2 Code-Switching

Code-switching was found to be one of the most prominent linguistic features used by Twitter users. Code-switching can be best defined as a linguistic phenomenon that involves alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation (Grosjean 1982). Code-switching can be concerned with different topics and functions (Palfreyman & Al Khalil, 2005). Twitter users tend to employ this strategy efficiently either between Romanized Arabic and English or between Arabic and English. Table 2 shows some examples from the data.

Table 2. Code-switching.

No.	Code-switching	The switch
1.	cannt wait to taste *Mansaf* 3ala la7meh	*Mansaf* 3ala la7meh
2.	I love you more than I love منسف wallah	منسف wallah
3.	منسف الجمعة more than 5orafy	more than 5orafy
4.	*Mansaf* in progress ya rab yzbot l jameed	in progress
5.	habibti you are the jameed to my *mansaf*	jameed / *mansaf*
6.	So bad بدي منسف	بدي منسف (I need mansaf)
7.	hahahahahah ya hala jordanins are awfully silent today lol sheklo *mansaf* hangover	are awfully silent today
8.	sahtin and wellbeing of the heart and *mansaf* Karaki Mavi like him	and wellbeing of the heart and *mansaf* Karaki

The data presented in Table 2 illustrates instances of code-switching observed in several tweets, exemplified by examples 1, 2, and 5. These tweets showcase the fluid integration of English and Romanized Jordanian Arabic (RJA), and vice versa, as evident in examples 3 and 8. Notably, these examples feature words in RJA, such as *5orafy* ‘legendary’, *Sahtin* ‘enjoy your mail’, *ya rab* ‘O Allah/Dear God’, *habibti* ‘my love’, and *ya hala* ‘welcome’.

In the case of code-switching, an interviewee explained that:

(1) We find it much easier for us to express ourselves in two languages than in one language.

Another respondent said that:

(2) We are governed by technical elements that can be conducive to employing this strategy in writing.

This shows how the users blend different linguistic elements to convey meanings or induce a sense of cultural identity within the character limit constraints.

4.3 Linguistic Economy

The heavy use of linguistic economy strategies was found to be another noteworthy technique used by Twitter users. They employ different types of abbreviations to reduce the orthographic forms of words. Accordingly, four main strategies, namely, shortenings, contractions, clippings, and acronyms, have been identified by the principle of linguistic economy. They are explained in the following sub-sections.

4.3.1 Shortening

Al-Khatib (2008) defined shortening as the process whereby writers use a form of speech that enables them to shorten words and replace a whole word with only one letter to save time and effort. Table 3 illustrates this phenomenon.

Table 3. Shortening.

No.	Shortening	Actual spelling
1.	how r u	How are you?
2.	u knw	You know.
3.	C u on F	See you on Friday.

Table 3 shows the shorting technique employed by users: ‘are’ is shortened to ‘r’, ‘you’ to ‘u’, and ‘see’ to ‘c’. This strategy reflects the dynamic nature of language on social media platforms, where conciseness and efficiency are important. One of the respondents reported that:

(3) Using this form of language enables us to show some linguistic ability we have and express our thoughts briefly.

The use of these shortening techniques highlights the users’ skill at navigating the linguistic constraints of the platform for effective communication.

4.3.2 Contractions

Al-Khatib (2008) differentiates contractions from shortening in the sense that the former refers to the process whereby a writer forms a short new word from a long one. Table 4 reveals a noteworthy pattern of contractions in the Twitter language used by Jordanians. The examples provided show instances where users employ non-standard orthographic forms, utilizing contractions such as 'gotta' for 'got to', 'wlc' for 'welcome', 'mins' for 'minutes', and the contraction of the adverb 'unfortunately' to 'unfrtntly'. This strategy highlights the deliberate use of contractions, despite their non-standard form, that underscores the adaptive and dynamic language use in online communication, where conciseness is prioritized for efficient expression and engagement.

Table 4. Contractions.

No.	Contractions	Actual spelling
1.	my favs are كبة I also like any kind *mansaf* منسف	favorites
2.	gotta love it	got to
3.	wlc bas ma 7aketi	welcome
4.	I need friends who love *mansaf* and would wanna go eat it with me.	want to
5.	they will love you 5 mins and go to eat	minutes
6.	im kidding vegans I rly respect ur opining	really
7.	Im with u on *mansaf* karaki hwvr unfrtntly cancelled	unfortunately

4.3.3 Clipping

Crystal (2008) defined clipping as the process of dropping a letter from the end of the original word. Having close attention to the data, it was observed that Twitter users are using this way of truncating the last letter of a word. Specifically, the data revealed that clipping is a remarkable technique used by the writers. This practice is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. Clipping.

No.	Clipping	Actual spelling
1.	my doc told me stop eatin meat.	eating
2.	thank you for givin me…	giving
3.	what iam sayin	saying
4.	Nashama are comin	coming

The data in Table 5 show that clipping is a prominent feature of the data. The users tend to omit the last letter of the word as shown in the above examples i.e., 'eatin' for 'eating', 'givin' for 'giving', and 'comin' for 'coming'. This practice of clipping reflects the adaptability of language in computer-mediated communication, where users prioritize concise expression, leading to the emergence of distinctive linguistic features like clipping for efficient and effective communication.

4.3.4 Acronym

It was a noticeable feature of Twitter data that acronyms are frequently used by writers in an attempt to save time and effort. The acronym can be best defined as a pronounceable word formed from the initial letters of words in a set phrase or series of words. The pressure to express one's ideas within a limited length constraint makes Twitter users adopt and opt for a variety of shortening techniques such as acronyms.

Table 6. Acronym.

No.	Acronym	Expression
1.	Lol yeah I love *mansaf*	*laughing out loud*
2.	taste so good *omg*	Oh my God
3.	OMW to Amman to support Alnashama	On my way
4.	BTW, u are also invited.	By the way

Table 6 indicates a trend of linguistic economy on Twitter. It highlights the prevalent use of acronyms in Jordanian Twitter language, where users employ abbreviated expressions for brevity and efficiency. Notable examples include 'lol' for 'laughing out loud', 'omg' for 'Oh my God', 'OMW' for 'On my way', and 'BTW' for 'by the way'. These acronyms serve as shorthand forms that users employ to convey common expressions quickly and concisely.

4.4 Slangs

The linguistic features of tweets in terms of slang are discussed under four main headings: (1) repetition, (2) onomatopoeia, (3) cacography, and (4) capitalization.

4.4.1 Repetition

Repetition is "a term which is used to indicate sounds and concepts that are repeated in one form or the other to provide reinforcement and emotional emphasis" (Nadarajan, 2006, p. 40). A careful examination of data shows that repetition can be found in the last or middle sounds of words. Repetition appears to be a prominent feature in this study; it showed that Twitter users make use of this process when they tend to greet or exchange formal courtesies with each other. Examples in Table 7 illustrate this point. The first example shows how the letter 'o' in the word 'so' was multiplied by the users as if they wanted to emphasize something. The data also shows that letter repetition is usually applied to vowel sounds as can be seen in the second example whereby the 'a' letter in 'eat' is multiplied.

Table 7. Repetition.

No.	Acronym	Actual spelling
1.	Sooooooooo delicious…..join us tmwwwwwwwwwwww	So tomorrow
2.	lets eaaaaaaat togeeeeeeeether and feeeeeeeel alright .. I love youuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu	eat, together, you
3.	no wayyyyyyy! Raheeeeeb !nothing like *mansaf* Karaki	Way Raheeb (fabulous)
4.	Ccheeeeeeeeeeer go go nashasma	Cheer, go
5.	wlc wlc alnashama	Welcome

4.4.2 Onomatopoeia

Bredin (1996) defined onomatopoeia as the use of words that can imitate the sounds associated with the actions or subjects they refer to. Data analysis showed that the writers inject and color their tweets with some onomatopoeic words to express different feelings or indicate an amiable act. Specifically, such onomatopoeic words were used by the writers either to indicate a funny sarcastic situation, to refer to a real situation that evokes laughter, or to create real laughter and amusement. The examples in Table 8 illustrate this phenomenon. Here, it is obvious that the Twitter users make use of onomatopoeia "hahahahahaha" to express laughter as they use the sounds that suggest the meaning, "hu hu hu " to express disappointment, and "yum yum" to express enjoyment or convey good taste in food.

Table 8. Onomatopoeia.

No.	Onomatopoeia	Example
1.	Ha ha ha finally we won.	Ha ha ha
2.	hahahahahaha mansaf is running thru our veins	hahahahahaha
3.	hu hu hu we lose 0-6.	hu hu hu
4.	yum yum delicious *mansaf*	yum yum

4.4.3 Cacography

Jordanians are well known for their sense of humor. So, it was unsurprising to find some aspects of humor in their tweets. As far as slang language is concerned, common usage of cacography in our data was found. Cacography is a type of humor; it is also a satiric misspelling which refers to a distorted, comic, and deliberate spelling. Such misspelling bears a humous resemblance, indirectly, to a related word or idea that can be easily retrieved and captured by the addressee (Watkins, 1999).

Table 9. Cacography.

No.	Cacography	Actual spelling
1.	alticket bs b nyeerah	Lerah (dinner)
2.	friday the day of sansaf	Mansaf
3.	alywm 9aba5na shaglouba	Magloubeh (Jordanian dish)
4.	A5rran 5ab6	5a6b (get engaged)
5.	jeeb ma3k birinda	Mirinda (drink)

In the first example, the users respelled the old name for Jordan currency *lierah* to *nyeeh* whereby the sound /l/ is replaced by the sound /n/. Such a respelling process refers to colloquial pronunciation usually used by old people. Besides, in the last example, the users mock an inaccurate way of pronouncing the word *Mirinda* as some illiterate people pronounce it *biranda* as the sound /m/ is replaced by the sound /b/. Referring to this phenomenon, one of the respondents said:

(4) We use such words to generate laughter and fun.

Another respondent said that:

(5) Playing and disordering the sounds of words and creating the 'new words' is not an easy process…only a person of great wit and imagination can do this; then these words become popular among others and start using them.

The respelling of words in colloquial pronunciation serves the purpose of generating laughter and amusement among users. Intentional play with sounds is not only a source of fun but also requires wit and imagination, according to respondents, as these creatively altered words gain popularity within the community.

4.4.4 Capitalization

About 80% of all tweets had no capitalization at all; 10% had only the first letter capitalized, while another 10% had specific words or whole sentences capitalized. It is realized that the users prefer to use lowercase to avoid the extra key push required to introduce capitalization. Crystal (2002, p. 87) states "the lower-case default mentality means that any use of capitalization is a strongly marked form of communication. Messages wholly in capitals are considered to be 'shouting', and are usually avoided; words in capitals add extra emphasis". He added that irony in an utterance like "Really? Who did SUCH THINGS" can be achieved through capitalizing the two words. Some of the interviews in this study clarified that capitalization can be conducive to effective communication among Twitter users only in some cases. A male respondent, for example, has clarified that:

(6) Shouting or emphasis, can be attained expressed in this form of communication only by using capitalization.

On the whole, it is noted that there is a clear tendency to use lower-case to save time and effort. Table 10 shows some examples. Here, Twitter users tended to use capitalization as a 'marked' form of e-communication efficiency. More precisely, the phrase "SUCH A WAY", in the third example, is capitalized by users to express the feeling of someone shocked at how something was done.

Table 10. Capitalization.

No.	Capitalization	Example
1.	we call it *MANSAF* KARAKI	*MANSAF* KARAKI
2.	ALNASHAMA please do it.	ALNASHAMA
3.	nnbelievable! Who cook it in SUCH A WAY	SUCH WAY
4.	YESS YES YES my sister makes vegan *mansaf*	YESS YES YES
5.	*mansaf* is so heavy its GOOD I LOVE IT	GOOD I LOVE IT

5. DISCUSSION

The current paper set out to examine the types of linguistic variations that Jordanians opt for while using Twitter. From the data analysis, it is observed that the form of language used is different from the written or even the spoken form of language, yet it includes some features of both (Baron, 2002). It is assumed that e-writing is considered as a new genre of writing that emerged and became popular among the e-generation to facilitate the process of writing as well as to serve some social functions (Atoum & Nouman, 2019; Nahar et al., 2020; Samara, 2020). On the whole, Jordanian Twitter users tend to employ many strategies and linguistic choices in this new genre of language. Having a thorough look at the data analysis, it is noticed that all of the linguistic choices employed by users can come under the umbrella term of 'slang'. This is also clearly manifested in the adopted framework of this study.

It is further noticed that tweets are dominated by using Jordanian Romanized Arabic, which represents an informal form of language, and such informality is also represented by the frequently used expressions of compliment and some religious expressions. That is to say, Twitter users seek to use some religious expressions such as *Alhamdulillah* 'praise be to Allah (God), *inshallah* 'Allah (God) willing, and *allah y7mehk* 'may Allah protect you'. Arabic numerals are also used to stand for Arabic sounds. For example, the number '5' stands for a semi-voiced uvular fricative (خ), '6' for a voiceless velarized denti-alveolar plosive (ط), and '8' for a voiceless uvular plosive (ق). The same idea was highlighted by some researchers (i.e., Al-Khatib & Sabbah, 2008; Al-Tamimi, & Gorgis, 2007; Dawaghreh, 2016) who indicated that the rationale behind using such numbers by users is that these numbers partly resemble the letters in shape. That is, the numbers are akin to sounds in terms of either pictorial or pronunciation similarity.

Another observation is that Twitter users heavily opted to employ code-switching strategies in certain situations to help them best smoothly express themselves (Vilares, 2016). As stated earlier, users tend to vary in using this strategy in the sense that the code-switching can be either between Romanized Arabic and English or between Arabic and English. It is also noted that users prefer to use Arabic or JRA for formulaic expressions such as greetings. On the other hand, English can be used for the topic itself, as it is shown in Table 2.

In addition to what has been mentioned about the characteristics of this form of writing, the principle of linguistic economy remains the most prominent feature for Twitter users. Tweets are inherently brief and constrained by a strict 160-character limit. Consequently, Twitter language is widely perceived to be concise and compact (Hu et al., 2013). To achieve that, some linguistic strategies have been devised by Jordanian Twitter users: shortening, contraction, clipping, and acronyms; done by omitting initial letters or the middle of words or sometimes dropping the final letters. These remarks sit well with those of Crystal (2011) who claimed linguistic characteristics evolved partly as a reaction to technological limitations, in this case, the limitation to 160 characters (for Roman alphabets). This pressure to express a piece of information within the length constraint motivates the users to adopt a variety of shortening techniques such as the use of abbreviations, contractions, logograms (e.g., '&' for 'and'), and other abbreviations conventions.

To address the lack of gestures and facial expressions that can be found in face-to-face communication, Twitter users try to use some means to show emotions. It is noted that using onomatopoetic words is one of the strategies used to overcome this issue. Using onomatopoeia on Twitter makes the language more expressive, creative, and richer. This is in line with Monderin and Go (2021) who affirmed that the use of onomatopoeia helps its users make the communication alive by imitating sounds and using words to add expressions to the conversation.

About cacography, the process of its respelling is done illogically yet creatively. This technique is employed by the writers for the sake of achieving rhetorical purposes or special effects. It can be used as in the two examples in Table 9 (see examples in 1 and 5) to subtly mimic very colloquial spoken words used by some people. Others are used only to create an atmosphere of fun, as in (see examples in 2 and 4). Accordingly, Izazi and Tengku-Sepora (2020) indicated that cacography is generated in a way where the users respelled certain words to imitate the real pronunciation and simultaneously colloquialize it into their style of pronunciation. They also add that cacography is used to shed light upon playfulness by adding a cynical or humorous hint through its spelling.

Further examination of data also shows that the users tend to use two strategies, repetition, and capitalization, to express thoughts, with an emphasis on a particular feeling. Specifically, these two techniques were employed to show attitudinal meanings. Experts further noted that attitudinal meanings were designed, for example, to promote positive self-presentation and build rapport and trust (Yao & Ngai, 2022). These were found in the data of this study. Repetition was employed in a way to show an attitudinal effect especially when Twitter users pay compliments or greet each other. Accordingly, in most examples, repetition is functional as it is used to deliver a particular message of appreciation, positive feelings, and love. Meanwhile, capitalization was used by the users to employ some functions such as shouting, emphasis, and sarcasm.

Furthermore, the deliberate use of capitalization is to create a special effect (Crystal, 2011). Crystal (2011) adds that messages entirely in capitals are considered to be 'shouting'. Then, it is worth noting that onomatopoeic words in the current study can be identified in terms of two functions: laughter and crying. Laughter and its degrees were shown in terms of various ways: for standard laughter 'haha' is used, 2) 'hihi' is written for a giggle, 3) 'hehe' is used to show a smug /shy laugh, and 4) 'hoho' is used to show the "Santa" laugh. Nevertheless, the only standard way of showing sadness or crying in the text is 'huhu'.

6. CONCLUSION

Digital communication has placed new demands on language that result in interesting variations in the use of written language. Consequently, Internet language has emerged as a unique form of language that has its own peculiarities that distinguish it from other types of written communication. This study set out to examine this form of language used on Twitter by Jordanians relying on the principle of linguistic economy. The findings of this study have revealed a unique blend of formal and informal language elements by Jordanian Twitter users. The prevalence of Jordanian Romanized Arabic and strategic code-switching demonstrated users' adaptability in navigating Twitter's language. The study highlighted the dominant role of linguistic economy within the 160-character limit, with users employing strategies such as shortening, contractions, clipping, and acronyms. Expressive techniques like repetition, onomatopoeia, cacography, and capitalization were identified as creative ways to convey emotions and attitudinal meanings. Overall, this research contributes valuable insights into the developing language dynamics on social media, offering insight into the intricate ways users shape communication in the digital age.

Nevertheless, the technological constraints promoted Twitter users to write in a particular way. That is to say, the pressure to communicate a considerable amount of information within the length constraint motivates the users to adopt a variety of shortening techniques. The scope of the current study is limited because it handled the slang variations as used by Jordanians without addressing the effect of any sociolinguistic factors (gender, age, education, etc.). Accordingly, future sociolinguistic studies with an emphasis on the effect and the role played by sociolinguistic factors are recommended to be conducted on the form of language used on Twitter.

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