

**RESEARCH TITLE**

**Sarcastic Comments on Electricity Crisis on Social Media  
A Sociolinguistic Study**

**Sattar Abduljabbar Mohammed<sup>1</sup> , Taisir Sabbar Kadhim<sup>2</sup> , Zaid Fouad Hashim<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> College of Agriculture' Al-Qadisiyah university, Iraq.

<sup>2</sup> Department of English Language, College of Education, Al-Muthana University, Iraq.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University, Iraq.

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**Abstract**

This study is about sarcastic comments on electricity crisis in Facebook only as one of the most popular social media. It attempts to study the type of the language used in Facebook throughout analyzing the types of the styles people use when commenting on electricity crisis. This study hypothesizes that people use different styles focusing primarily on the casual one when making a comment. To conduct this study, an adapted model is chosen. The model depends on Joos's styles of language (1998). The data is collected from Iraqi official and social pages in Facebook with 100 comments as a sample to be representative of the way people make a comment. This study concluded that people are different in their language styles when commenting on electricity crisis with a primary focus on the casual style.

**Key Words:** Sociolinguistics, sarcasm, comments, electricity crisis, Facebook, and language styles.

## 1. Introduction

Language is essentially a means of communication between individuals in a group, a focus to study in sociolinguistics. Everyone believes that language is universal, which means that everyone may use language to convey their sentiments, emotions, signs, and other forms of communication. According to Crystal (2013), communication refers to the transfer of information (a message) between a source and a receiver via a signaling system, with the term "human communication" being used to limit the definition. People can communicate with other people in a variety of ways. Language is a tool that people use to communicate their desires, messages, information, and ideas to others. The speaker's and hearer's styles influence communication as well. It can be inferred that people's perceptions of communication are influenced by their relationships.

People in society use language in a variety of ways, which is referred to as language variance. Language variation is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs in groups of people who speak the same language. Style is one sort of language variation. According to Moore (2004), speaking styles refer to the ways in which speakers negotiate their positions and purposes within a system of distinctions and possibilities as actors in social (and sociolinguistics) space. Some characteristics, including as the speakers' educational background, social standing, age, and gender, influence their style. When communicating with others, a speaker uses a distinct linguistic style depending on the circumstance and context. A speaker will pay attention to the words they use, their syntax, and the structure of their sentences in relation to the situation.

Social media in general and Facebook in particular can be considered as good domains where language can be investigated. Facebook is a social networking website that users use to communicate with new or existing acquaintances. Facebook is a popular social networking platform in Iraq. As a result, people leave comments on postings or follow a post and leave a comment on it. Sarcastic comments are much of interest in Iraq on electricity crisis. When a post is shared on Facebook, a large number of individuals attempt to comment sarcastically on it, prompting the researchers to conduct the current study on comments on such official or social posts (Rouse, 2009). So, it is hypothesized that Facebook users comment on electricity crisis posts differently in a sarcastic way. As such, this study aims to differentiate among sarcastic comments by focusing on language style.

## 2. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of the impact of many characteristics of society, such as cultural norms, expectations, and context, on how language is used, as well as the impact of society on language. It is distinct from language sociology, which focuses on the impact of language on society. Sociolinguistics is closely related to linguistic anthropology and overlaps with pragmatics (Wardhaugh, 2006).

Studies of how language variations differ between groups divided by social characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, religion, status, gender, level of education, age, etc.) and/or geographical obstacles demonstrate sociolinguistics' historical relationship with anthropology (a mountain range, a desert, a river, etc.). These studies also look at how disparities in usage and ideas about usage create and reflect social or socioeconomic strata. The use of a language differs from location to place, as well as within socioeconomic classes, and sociolinguistics is the study of these sociolects (Trudgill, 2000).

Interviews with native speakers of a language, matched-guise tests, and other observations or research linked to dialects and speaking can all be used to study

sociolinguistics (Wardhaugh, 2006).

A sociolinguist might investigate how social views influence what constitutes proper or inappropriate language use in a given situation. Sociolinguists may also research the grammar, phonetics, lexicon, and other features of different sociolects. Sociolinguists also look at language in huge populations on a national level to see how it is used as a social institution. William Labov, a Harvard and Columbia University graduate, is frequently considered as one of the founders of the discipline of sociolinguistics. He makes sociolinguistics a scientific discipline by focusing on the quantitative investigation of variation and development within languages (Wardhaugh, 2006).

Sociolinguistic studies often survey a sample population in order to assess the realization of particular sociolinguistic factors. Regional dialects are a well-studied source of variation. Dialectology is the study of language variants based mostly on geographic distribution and associated characteristics. Dialectologists are sociolinguists who study grammatical and phonological traits that correspond to geographical locations (Trudgill, 2000).

The Matched-guise test is another option. The listener is asked to listen to a pair of words and rate them based on personality and dialect, as certain groups have similar attitudes toward language (Labov, 2010).

### **3. Sarcastic Comment**

Sarcastic comment is the caustic use of words to mock someone or something, generally in a funny fashion. Although sarcastic comment may use ambivalence, it is not always ironic. It is most visible in spoken word, and is usually context-dependent. It is mostly recognizable by the intonation with which it is delivered or, with an undercurrent of irony, by the excessive disproportion of the comment to the setting (Hernández & Juan, 2016).

Things can be ironic, but only people have the ability to be sarcastic. Second, while people may be accidentally sarcastic, sarcastic comment takes deliberate intent. What distinguishes sarcastic comment from other forms of verbal aggression is that it is overt irony utilized by the speaker as a kind of verbal hostility (Rockwell, 2006).

Sarcastic comment is thought to emerge as a cognitive and emotional skill used by adolescents to push the boundaries of civility and truth in discourse. Both recognizing and expressing sarcastic comment necessitate the development of language comprehension, especially if sarcastic comment comes without a cue or signal (e.g., a sarcastic tone or rolling the eyes). Sarcastic comment is said to be more sophisticated than lying because lying can be expressed as early as three years old, whereas sardonic statements occur considerably later in development (Rockwell, 2006).

### **4. Facebook**

Facebook, like most social networking sites, offers a pre-formatted web page where users can enter personal information such as gender, birthday, hometown, political and religious beliefs, e-mail and physical addresses, relationship status, activities, interests, favorite music and movies, educational background, and a main personal photo. Although today's Facebook users come from all walks of life, college students continue to make up the biggest percentage of active Facebook users, accounting for around 30% of all users. Facebook currently serves almost 500 million individuals, allowing them to share a wide range of information and connect with others (Houston, 2013).

Its use suggests that particular users are present on the social website, that they spend time there, that they visit frequently, and that the activities they undertake are of a certain

character. People of various ages communicate and share content; they share movies and photos, discuss topics, talk, post adverts for group activities, and play available apps. Younger generations (e.g., students) spend up to eight hours per day on this social networking site. We believe that having a large Facebook presence and the additional information flow management requirements that come with it engage students in these activities while they are constantly interacting and socializing, preventing them from focusing effectively on their academic work (Aryanda, 2013).

Facebook and other social networking sites have become a ferocious passion for everyone these days. People are devoting more time to social networking activities than to their studies, and this is having a negative impact on their academic achievement. The negative consequences of these social networking sites outnumber the positive ones. These sites have unintentionally harmed society. People fall prey to social networks at a higher rate than anyone else. This is because they are drawn to these sites, such as those on social life's electrical difficulties, to kill boredom during their study time by leaving caustic comments to express a specific objective (Rouse, 2009).

## 5. Methodology

This is accomplished through an adapted model to analyse the selected data. The sarcastic comments on electricity crisis in Facebook will be the data chosen between 2019 and 2022 to ensure up-to-date data. These comments focus on the Iraqi electricity crisis, so all the selected comments are written in the Iraqi Arabic language, but provided with translation for every comment so that the meaning will be clear. The selected comments to be the data will be 100 comments to provide a clear vision about the way Facebook users comment sarcastically. The model of the analysis will be an adapted one.

### 5.1. Model of the Analysis

Language style is categorized into five groups based on the degree of formality according to Joos (1998). Frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate styles are used to describe the language used in those selected sarcastic comments (Joos, 1998).

#### 1. Frozen Style

The most formal type is the frozen style, often known as oratorical style. It is typically employed in formal situations with symbolic significance. For example, informal rituals, legal proceedings, and governmental paperwork. The absence of reader participation distinguishes this style. The reader has no recourse against the author.

#### 2. Formal Style

In general, formal style is employed in formal settings. According to Richard (1985), formal style is when people carefully consider pronunciation, word choice, and sentence structure when using the language. The use of full name addresses, avoidance of primary word repetition, and the use of synonyms are all characteristics of formal language.

#### 3. Consultative Style

The consultative style is the most unmarked of the four. It is a communication style that is employed in semi-formal situations, and it is the type of language that is expected of the everyday speaker. Consultative is utilized in a variety of situations, including group discussions, regular conversations at school, business meetings, and trade speech discussions.

#### 4. Casual Style

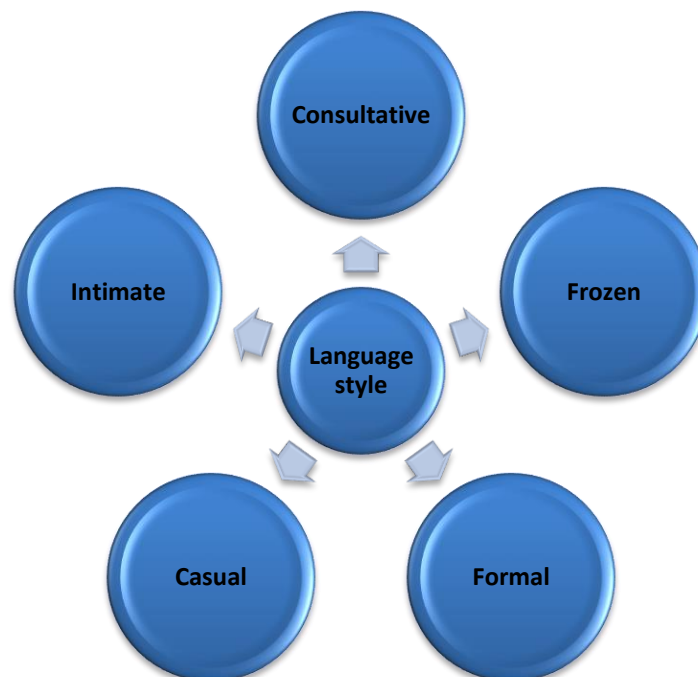
Casual style is a linguistic style used in casual situations among people who share similar

characteristics such as age, gender, education, social status, ethnicity, and other aspects. The appearance of informal vocabulary such as colloquial, slang, even banned phrases, etc., can also be traced back to a casual manner.

## 5. Intimate Style

The intimate style is marked by jargon and extraction. The use of confidential codes, terms signaling personal relationships, quick and slurred pronunciation, non-verbal communication, and non-standard forms are all elements of this style.

Fig.1: An adapted model of language style according to Joos (1998):



## 5.2. Data Analysis

In this section, 100 comments will be selected randomly from official and social pages in Facebook. The person who makes a sarcastic comment will not be mentioned for privacy reasons. Here, a table will be drawn consisting of four major sections: the sarcastic comment, the translated comment, style of the sarcastic comment, and the reason. This is illustrated below:

Table 1: Analysis of sarcastic comments.

No.	Sarcastic comment	Translated comment	style of the sarcastic comment	Reason
1	فعاليات الصيف والشتاء	Summer and Winter acts	Intimate	Codes
2	المهم ايران تستفاد	Iran first	Frozen	Symbolic
3	كون تنتلون كلكم	May you all die by electricity	Casual	Colloquial
4	الكهرباء سببها امريكا واسرائيل	America and Israel are the cause of the electricity crisis	Intimate	Codes
5	راح تحلها مهى الدوري	Al Douiry will make it	Casual	Colloquial / ethic
6	خطوة جيدة بالاتجاه الصحيح	A good step in the right direction	Formal	Formal words
7	شئو هل المهزلة	What a mess!	Casual	Slang
8	شئو الجديد بالموضوع	What's the new thing?	Consultative	Semi-formal
9	راح يزودون المحطات بدهن حر	Animal fat is used for powering	Casual	Slang

		stations		
10	حتلوه هه عود	Will you solve it?	Casual	Colloquial
11	تعالوا اخذوا الوايرتات	Come to take wires!	Intimate	Codes
12	معقوله بالعراق راح ترمش	Impossible to run always in Iraq	Casual	Colloquial
13	قللو منها تره اجهزتنا احتركت	Reduce it! Systems got fired	Intimate	Codes
14	طفوها احنا بخدمتكم	Turn it off, no matter.	Casual	Colloquial
15	تحجي تطلع مو زين	Nothing said is much better.	Casual	Colloquial
16	هي هاي العايزة	That's what was needed	Casual	Colloquial
17	كل صيانتكم تطلع بالصيف	Your maintenance is always on hot days	Intimate	Codes
18	همزين يقللون حتى نشوف الشمس	Reduce! Just to see the sun	Casual	Colloquial
19	براحتكم فداكم كل المحولات	Do what you want	Casual	Colloquial
20	صارلها اسبوع زفت الكهرباء	It is a week no electricity	Casual	Colloquial
21	شلون راح ندبرها واحنا ماترمش عدنه الكهرباء	How to live with no electricity!	Intimate	Codes
22	بعد ان رأيت هذا المنشور تمنيت لو اني قندسا	Seeing this post, a beaver I like to be	Frozen	Symbolic
23	ع اساس احنا بدبي	Are we in Dubai?	Intimate	Codes
24	شنو معنى الكهرباء؟ ممكن توضيح	Will you tell me what's electricity?	Intimate	Codes
25	شدت سبلت اريد اشوف الربط صحيح	I bought an AC, I just want to check it	Casual	Colloquial
26	بردنه الكهرباء ماترمش عدنه	We got cold because of electricity	Intimate	Codes
27	مو خوش سالفة	Bad news	Casual	Colloquial
28	بدوا يصورون برنامج الصدمة	Shock is on	Intimate	Colloquial
29	جهالنا تمرضت طفوها ... شكرا لكم من القلب	Kids are sick because of electricity, turn it off. Deeply, thank you	Consultative	Semi-formal
30	هي لو تظفي سنة محد يحجي	Never there will be a complaint!	Intimate	Codes
31	خبرة واسعة في مجال الكهرباء	Good experience in electricity	Frozen	Symbolic
32	خوش سالفة	Good news	Casual	Colloquial
33	أي ... حبايين طفوو الكهرباء	Yes, turn it off, please!	Intimate	Codes
34	اطالة عمر الأجهزة من خلال الراحة المبرمجة	Systems will be OK by turning it of	Frozen	Symbolic
35	رواتب ضخمة لأصحاب المولدات	Big salaries for generators' owners	Formal	Formal words
36	حسبي الله ونعم الوكيل		Formal	Formal words
37	قليله يومين سووها اسبوع	Make it as long as you want	Casual	Colloquial
38	خو يقللون من التصدير للخارج	Let's reduce exporting it	Consultative	Semi-formal
39	الاجهزة الكهربائية تعبت من التشغيل	Electric devices got load.	Consultative	Semi-formal
40	كضينه عمرنه هيج	It has been for a long time as such	Casual	Colloquial
41	شيقلون بعد	What to reduce!	Casual	Colloquial
42	ليش هي الكهرباء زينه	Is electricity good?	Intimate	Codes
43	مع الاسف ... حادثة قليلة الحدوث	What a bad news, so rare to turn it off	Frozen	Symbolic
44	بس شفت المنشور طفت الكهرباء	It is turned off as I saw the post	Intimate	Codes
45	كلش عادي	So natural	Casual	Colloquial

46	وين الجديد بالموضوع	Is it new?	Casual	Colloquial
47	طفوها لان الدم يبس بعروكنا	Turn it off! We'll die of being cold	Intimate	Codes
48	المبلل ما يخاف من المطر	It is always the same thing	Intimate	Codes
49	عاشت اياديكم ابطال	Well-done, heroes	Frozen	Symbolic
50	ماكو هيج حجي	It is a lie	Casual	Colloquial
51	اعذاركم متخلص	Excuses will not be finished	Casual	Colloquial
52	شكرا لوزارة الكهرباء	Ministry of Power, Thank you!	Formal	Name address
53	دخزوها كلها وخلصونه	Just take it all	Casual	Colloquial
54	خاف الحوت عض الكيبل	The wale may bite the cable!	Intimate	Codes
55	ويستمر الابداع والفن	Creativity and art keep on.	Frozen	Symbolic
56	لا تعليق	No comment	Formal	Formal words
57	اعذار واهيه	Bad excuses	Formal	Formal words
58	خوش خبر	Good news	Consultative	Semi-formal
59	علمود اصحاب المولدات	For the owners of generators	Casual	Colloquial
60	عفيه عليكم	Well-done	Intimate	Codes
61	شكرا على المعلومة	Thank you for this post.	Frozen	Symbolic
62	يادي النيله	Disaster!	Casual	Colloquial
63	مبروك	Congratulations	Formal	Formal word
64	ثلجنا من الكهرباء	We are frozen by electricity	Casual	Colloquial
65	معلم على الصدعات كلبي	It is so normal	Intimate	Codes
66	ههههههههه	Lot of laugh	Casual	Colloquial
67	حلوووه	So nice	Casual	Colloquial
68	لا زعلتونه بهذا الخبر	No! we got angry because of this.	Intimate	Codes
69	هي ضلت على الكهرباء	Nothing is good.	Intimate	Codes
70	بالخيرررر	Good luck	Intimate	Codes
71	عاش العراق	Long live Iraq	Frozen	Symbolic
72	هلا بجيتك	Welcome back!	Casual	Colloquial
73	هاي اتفاقية وبيه اهل المولدات	It is a deal with owners of generators	Casual	Colloquial
74	خالد العطية بمكة	Kalid al-Atiya is in Mecca	Formal	Name
75	اتفاق مدروس	It is an intended deal	Formal	Formal words
76	جذب	A lie	Casual	Colloquial
77	وشراح يصير بعدين	Then, what so?	Casual	Colloquial
78	عفيه بصوت صدام حسين	Good, in Saddam's voice	Consultative	Semi-formal
79	ولا لجنة... تخدم الشعب	No committee serves the public	Intimate	Codes
80	خلية الازمة مالتكم هي ازمة بحالها	Crisis committee is a crises	Consultative	Semi-formal
81	كلها كذب	Just lies	Frozen	Symbolic
82	قراراتكم بس حبر على ورق	Your decisions are just speeches	Consultative	Semi-formal
83	الكهرباء من سمعت بهذا الخبر رمشت وطففت	After this news, electricity got worse	Casual	Colloquial
84	ما اسامحك يا رئيس الوزراء	I will not forgive you, PM	Intimate	Codes
85	تحية طيبة... هذه القرارات لن تجدي نفعا	Hello, such things are not beneficial	Formal	Formal words
86	ما دمرنا غير اللجان مالتكم	Your committees hurt us	Casual	Colloquial
87	انت كضيتها علينا سيلفيات	It is just selfies	Intimate	Codes
88	مجرد كلام	Just words	Frozen	Symbolic
89	الف مبروك للشعب الصابر	Congratulations for the patient	Frozen	Symbolic

		people		
90	هاي القصة معروفة	Such a story is known	Casual	Colloquial
91	بالتوفيق	Good luck	Formal	Formal words
92	رجعت بالسلامة لو تفتر باوربا	Have you returned or still travelling?	Intimate	Codes
93	ضحك على الذقون	Just lies	Formal	Formal words
94	لو توزعنه على الدول اشرفك	It is good to divide us among countries	Intimate	Codes
95	حفظنا قراراتك	A known story	Casual	Colloquial
96	اهمشي انت مرتاح	Your rest is what matters	Intimate	Codes
97	دولة بس فالحة باليوسسات	It is a matter of posts	Casual	Colloquial
98	انريد كهرباء منريد حجي	No words, electricity is what we need	Casual	Colloquial
99	مجرد كلام حجيتيه ومشيت	Just words you uttered	Consultative	Semi-formal
100	كلكم نفس الطينة	All are alike	Intimate	Codes

## 6. Results

The results of using sarcastic comments can be shown in the following table:

Table 2: Results of sarcastic comments.

No.	Type of Comment	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Casual	39	29 %
3.	Intimate	28	28 %
4.	Formal	24	24 %
4.	Consultative	9	9 %

From this table, one can understand that the majority of sarcastic comments are casual. This indicates that people tend always to use their colloquial words to express their opinions in 29 % of the selected sample. They are direct, easy to be understood and criticizing to the whole situation of electricity crisis in Iraq. The second type is the intimate one, which is also of a high frequency that is 28 %. This shows that commentators attempt to express their personal attitude throughout the use of codes and non-standard words to show their disgust towards the electricity crisis.

The third type is the formal one, which is 24 % of their total comments. This shows that people use formal words to express their personal attitudes for criticizing electricity crisis. This might be considered as an indication for the educated people's participation in the total frequency of sarcastic comments. Finally, the fourth type of the sarcastic comments is called consultative, which is 9 % of the total sample. This shows a very low percentage in which people resort to using semi-formal expressions. Such a thing indicates that people attempt to avoid such expressions in order to make their messages more direct than a mixture of formal and in formal words.



## 7. Conclusion

The researcher came to the conclusion that linguistic styles were influenced by the user's by different social factors such as status, education, and others. According to the conclusions of the study, Facebook users have a tight relationship because of their language styles. The casual style is the most popular among Iraqi Facebook users. It signifies that the person appreciated using Facebook as a social media platform. Even though it is connected to personal privacy, Facebook forced the user to share their feelings.

It can be concluded that Facebook users use different styles when commenting on electricity crisis. This leads to the fact that there is a variation in the degree of sarcastic comments since it is affected by personal attitudes greatly. One important fact is that there is some sort of freedom when commenting on electricity crisis. Some comments are quite sarcastic that might be offensive. This shows that such a crisis lead people to think badly and affects their manners too.

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