# Protest in the Digital Era: A Critical Analysis of Facebook Posts of the Fourth Circle Protests in Jordan

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*Abstract*—This study critically investigates the discourse of Facebook posts on Jordan's Fourth Circle protests. The Facebook posts are considered to be protest discourse, with ideological imprints of positive "we" in-group representations and negative "they" out-group descriptions. Utilizing a critical-discourse analysis method, this study reveals that Facebook posts were efficiently used to define the ethnonational identity of the participants and to describe their goals and activities, as well as to provide continual updates on the protests. The activists used linguistic strategies (e.g., rural terms, pronouns, and humorous posts). The activists purposefully used the indigenous dialect (i.e., the rural Jordanian East-Bank dialect) to express solidarity and address indigenous ethnic aspirations. Consequently, the success of the Fourth Circle protests can be summarized in three great achievements, which are: (1) Prime Minister Hani Mulki's resignation; (2) cancellation of the income-tax law; and (3) solutions that reduced the cost of living to a more acceptable rate.

*Index Terms*—online discourse, Facebook, Jordanian protests, online activism, social media

## I. INTRODUCTION

On May 31, 2018, thousands of Jordanians took to the streets across the kingdom to protest the price hikes of fuel derivatives and electricity. The protests (henceforth referred to as the "Fourth Circle protests") soon became widespread across most of the country, with cities rejecting the government's decision, as well as the income-tax draft law that would have increased taxes on employees by 5% (Prieto, 2018). For five consecutive days, tens of thousands of protesters gathered at the Fourth Circle, where the prime minister's office is located, and chanted, "No, no to corruption," "We are not a milk cow," "Hani al-Mulki's government is ruled by thieves," "Where has the people's money disappeared to?", "We are here until we bring the downfall of the bill," "This government is shameful!", "Our demands are legitimate," and "Bread, freedom, and social justice!" (Aljazeera, 2018). On June 4, 2018, the fifth day of the demonstrations, Jordan's Prime Minister Hani Mulki submitted his government's resignation to the king.

During the demonstrations, many Jordanian protesters used Facebook as an alternative media channel to report the events and share their views. As Ahmad (2014) said, "The [opinions are] posted to other anonymous [inter]net readers; [the posts] speak to an audience, who is assumed to share this feeling of disgust." Therefore, Jordanian protesters in the Fourth Circle used Facebook to post their opinions and videos, which motivated the Jordanians to join their protests. They tried to reclaim their rights and prevent the Mulki government from establishing the new income-tax law.

Accordingly, the language created via Facebook status messages (FSMs) represented society's response to various social and political events. Therefore, examining FSMs as they were posted by Jordanian protesters was an appropriate tool with which to conduct such research.

Hence, the present study aims to shed light on the answers to the following research questions: (1) What strategies in online discourse were repeated in the posts to highlight certain ideologies?; and (2) To what extent did the Jordanian activists mobilize the Fourth Circle protests via social, cultural, and linguistic knowledge as a discourse strategy?

Generally speaking, analyzing the Jordanian protests' online discourse was not a new task. According to Mongiello (2016), political protests via a range of social movements have been examined extensively, but few studies have focused on the language of online protests. In the Jordanian context, most of the linguistic studies focused on the same matter, pertaining to a cross-linguistic or interlingual study of specific speech acts (e.g., an apology Huwari, 2018; Banikalef et al., 2015; refusal Al-shboul, 2016; compliment Al-khatib, 2006 or request Al-Ali & Alawneh, 2010). To establish the present study, the next section will briefly review the latest related research.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

The "Arab Spring" refers to the uprisings, demonstrations, and political actions that occurred in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, and Yemen beginning in December 2011. Social researchers (e.g., Acemoglu et al., 2017), and Farhan and Varghese (2018) have raised the question, "How did social media—particularly, Facebook—pave the way for the Arab Spring?" Among all social-network sites (SNS), Facebook is used by 74% of social-media users in the Middle East (Dennis et al., 2017). This high level of Facebook use began when the uprising broke out in most Arab countries (e.g., Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria).

Farhan and Varghese (2018) examined how the Yemeni youth used Facebook to attract more supporters and keep their spirits up. The study found that most Arab Spring activists (78.3%) had been using Facebook for more than 3 years. They stated that Facebook served as a crucial tool to connect Yemeni users and keep them informed about the events in Yemen.

In research about the communicative functions of status updates on Facebook, Banikalef and Bataineh (2017) sought to explore the types of speech acts in the status updates posted by young Jordanian Facebook users. 4092 messages were collected from 200 students aged between 19 and 24 years. Findings revealed that there are three new speech acts emerged from the data and were added to Searle's taxonomy, namely, God's invocation, humor, and quotation. The researchers suggested that these new speech acts are inherently related to the participants' socio-cultural backgrounds. The authors concluded that the cultural norms and religious background have strong effects on the participants' linguistic choices in their native language.

Shepperson and Price (1958) claimed that Chilembwe's rebellion in January 1915 in Malawi against the British Empire was just one example of how the Indigenous language mobilized people to resist colonialism. Similar to the Jordanian protesters, the original Malawians represented themselves by using original indicators (e.g., folk music or cultural songs). They deliberately used Indigenous indicators to distinguish themselves from others and assert their primary role in their country.

In conclusion, protest language via Facebook status messages is still understudied and must be more thoroughly explored. Therefore, it is worthy to consider Facebook to be an ongoing database of social and political attitudes, with new data being added in real-time. These data will help researchers add a new dimension to Jordanian sociolinguistic studies by examining the Jordanian protesters' opinions on the Facebook platform.

A View on the Jordanian Uprising

Bebawi et al. (2014) theorized that social-media platforms "such as Twitter, Facebook, and blogs that provided coverage of the events" were more effective than mainstream journalism during the Arab Spring. Even mainstream journalists found themselves following the wave of social media when following up on the latest events of the uprising. Therefore, social media played a major role as a free platform used by protestors to contact each other quickly across far distances. Jenzen et al. (2020) stated that Twitter has emerged as a signifier of contemporary protest and an extended public space for protest expressions. The results found by Jenzen et al. (2020) support the assumption of this research, which reinforce the power of social media. It is considered to be a trusted platform that protestors worldwide use to effectively manage their protests.

In conclusion, social media is a powerful source of news for protesters and a tool they can use to communicate and manage their uprisings.

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### A. Sociopragmatics

The scope of sociopragmatics is wide, and it covers different areas [e.g., interactional sociolinguistics (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992), linguistics anthropology (Duranti, 2009), and variational pragmatics (Schneider & Barron, 2008)]. However, the current study focuses on specific sociopragmatic phenomena that take an ethnomethodological perspective (Andersen & Aijme, 2012). This perspective seeks to investigate how individuals construct, prolong, and maintain their realities. Garfinke (2002) states that ethnomethodology aims to "discover [what people] in particular situations do [and] the methods they use to create the patterned orderliness of [their] social [lives]".

In this context, "ideology" refers to how a group of people in certain situations represent themselves or are represented by others. Ideological discourse usually examines the representations of group members (hereafter referred to as "actors") and their associated actions. Thus, the actors must recognize and represent themselves as group members to function as group members (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). In this study, the actors are therefore determined to be either one of "us" (e.g., the ordinary public) or one of "them" (e.g., the government) Chiluwa (2015) and Dijk (1997). Consequently, the protest discourse in the current study clarifies Van Dijk's (1997) ideological square. The core of Van Dijk's strategy is the differentiation between "us" and "them," which includes a positive in-group description and a negative out-group description.

Therefore, an ideological square would:

*"Emphasize 'our' good properties/actions.*
*Emphasize 'their' bad properties/ actions.*
*Mitigate 'our' bad properties/actions.*

*Mitigate 'their' good properties/actions."*
— (Dijk, 1997, p. 33)

Following the CDA approach and Dijk's (1997) ideological square, this study investigates the Facebook content of the Fourth Circle protests that occurred in Jordan on May 31, 2018 and went on for five days. All this forms a theoretical framework to analyze the Facebook status messages. It is likewise significant to show the nature of the participants and their activities, both in terms of culture and linguistics, to accurately provide situational context to the protests.

### B. *The Discourse of Protests in Jordanian Standard Arabic and Jordanian Colloquial Arabic*

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a small country in the Middle East. It locates between Palestine to the west, Syria to the north, Iraq to the east, and Saudi Arabia to the south. 92% of Jordanians are Muslims, 6% are Christians from various sects, and 2% have a different religion (Hendriks & Baker, 2008). The capital of Jordan is Amman. Its population consists of two groups: the Jordanians and the Palestinians. According to Frisch (2004), the population of Palestinian origin is believed to constitute at least 58% of Jordan's total population. Jordanian culture is based on the fact that Jordan is a tribal society with a robust sense of Arab identity rooted in Jordanians' cultural system, particularly in the areas from which the data for this study have been collected (Al-Adaileh, 2007). Tribalism as a main part of modern Jordanian society still has an important control over how Jordanians live, eat, celebrate, dress, solve conflicts, and make decisions (Banikalef et al., 2015).

According to Banikalef and Maros (2013), there is no comprehensive description of any Jordanian dialect to date.

These dialects are as follows:

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA): It is mostly used in most formal speech and writing (e.g., literary texts, news broadcasts, and high-register speech).

Urban or Ammani Dialect (UD): Most of its speakers (around 95%) are new to Amman and have moved in and settled there after the Arab–Israeli Wars of 1948 and 1967 (Abd-el-Jawad, 1986). One of this dialect's major features is its pronunciation of / q/ as [ʔ] (i.e., glottal stop). For most women, this dialect is considered to be "soft" and "prestigious." This "softness" or "prestigiousness" is only a social classification that has been established due to the differences between femininity and masculinity. According to Banikalef and Maros (2013), most Jordanian females believe the urban dialect is socially acceptable only for the most prestigious social class.

Rural Dialect: It is spoken by native village dwellers—especially in Irbid, Ajloun, and Jerash—as well as by the peasants of Madaba, Amman, Karak, Shobak, and Tafila, with differences in pronunciation. One of the main features of this dialect is the pronunciation of /q/ as [g] and /k/ as mostly [tʃ] (Al-Raba'a, 2016).

Bedouin Dialects (BD): It is spoken by about 2 million nomadic tribes (e.g., Huwaytat, Alababid, and Bani Hassan). One of the major features of this dialect is the pronunciation of /q/ as mostly [dʒ] (i.e., voiced post-alveolar affricate).

Britain and Cheshire (2003, p. 60) found that the competing linguistic features in Jordan were part of the urban Palestinian dialect on the one hand, and of the rural Jordanian East-Bank dialect on the other. These dialects can also be easily distinguishable from one another, and consequently, the regional background of a speaker can simply be determined through the pronunciation of some phonemes (e.g., /q/ and /ʔ/ in the rural and urban dialects).

The rural Jordanian East-Bank dialect and urban Palestinian dialect have linguistic differences that are clearest at the phonological level (Al-Tamimi, 2001). For example, while the standard phonemes /dʒ/ (i.e., voiced postalveolar affricate, /k/ (i.e., voiceless velar stop), and /q/ (i.e., voiceless uvular stop) are pronounced as [dʒ], [tʃ] (i.e., voiceless postalveolar affricate), and [g] (i.e., voiced velar stop) in the rural dialect, they are pronounced as [ʒ] (i.e., voiced postalveolar fricative), [k], and [ʔ] (i.e., glottal stop) in the urban dialect.

These differences are not only on the pronunciation level but also on the lexicon level. Although the two dialects share a large proportion of the same vocabulary, some words are more specific to the rural dialect, and some are more specific to the urban dialect. For example, "jidiy versus sayidi garnd father," "hassa versus hallaʔ" "now, bisawwi versus biʕmal, ""to do, bidesh versus mabadi, I don't want," "ʕayyaṭ versus baka, he cried," and "sih versus sarikh, he shouts," respectively.

The Jordanian colloquial Arabic (normally, rural dialect and urban dialect) is used on a much wider scale in Jordan than the MSA or BD and therefore is a commonly used communication medium across social-media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Google+) (Gelbukh, 2014). Since the Jordanian colloquial Arabic has also been frequently used in everyday communication, it developed as a feature of the protest language on Facebook. This study reveals that the Jordanian protesters deliberately used the Indigenous languages (e.g., the rural Jordanian East-Bank dialect) to address and voice Indigenous cultural aspirations since the protests were initially seen as addressing "national" concerns, in line with an overall "national interest." Using the rural Jordanian East-Bank dialect provided the protesters with the flexibility of self-expression and of saying what must be said. Furthermore, specific social terms and definitions that are more accurately expressed in the rural dialect, as their meaning is expressed more effectively and efficiently, both socially and culturally, which in turn leads to better communication. This can be said about the use of "sahij" (i.e., a person who blindly or unquestioningly follows the government), which lacks a direct English translation.

## IV. Methodology

Jordanian protesters created Facebook pages and groups to allow anyone with shared interests to join and participate in discussion forums and threads. These Facebook tools (e.g., pages, groups, or personal profiles) are open to anyone with a Facebook account, including Facebook "friends" from Jordan and throughout the world. Through these Facebook tools, users joined the movement, thereby initiating online protests that moved offline and prompting a series of large-scale protests. This study examines the Fourth Circle protests' discourse that was posted on Facebook. These posts reflected the impact on ideological thinking of the positive, inclusive "us" representation and the negative, exclusive "they" representation.

The data consist of Facebook status messages posted publicly by Jordanian Facebook users (e.g., individuals, social activists, and professional associations). The data represents posts that highlight social, political, and cultural problems specific to Jordanian society. Some of them voice identity-based concerns that are local to Jordan. For example, a Facebook group titled "m?nash" (we are penniless) was created by Jordanian young adults. Data collection was conducted between May 31, 2018 and June 4, 2018, during which the protests were taking place. During this period, a total of 125 Facebook status messages were gathered from 35 Facebook profiles. They are comprised of posts from Facebook personal profiles, groups, and pages. Table 1 below summarizes the corpus data. The Facebook status messages are numbered P1-P125 ('P' refers to the participant).

The current study used a qualitative critical-discourse analysis method (CDA) as a baseline for the research design. When analyzing the data, applying the interpretive CDA indicates the role of ideology in the Jordanian Facebook protesters' opinions. The pragmatic functions and rhetorical tactics used by the protesters to construct their posts were also investigated.

TABLE 1
DETAILS OF THE FACEBOOK CORPUS

| Type of Account | Number of Status Messages | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Facebook Personal Profile | 55 | 44 |
| Facebook Group | 40 | 32 |
| Facebook Page | 30 | 24 |
| Total | 125 | 100 |

## V. Analysis and Discussion

Due to the limited word count of this research, we can only analyze a limited number of posts that clearly highlight the ideological stances—especially those which fall under some of the categories mentioned previously (e.g., self-identification and descriptions of the different actors). In these examples, posts involved the rural Jordanian East-Bank dialect (RD), urban Palestinian dialect (UD), and Bedouin dialects (BD) are highlighted and classified according to their frequency of occurrence.

### A. Self-Identity and Actor Description

Table 2 below shows that 81.6% of the data were written in the rural Jordanian East-Bank dialect, while UR accounted for 10.4%, and BD for 8% of the total status messages in the sample. This reduction in UD could be due to the inherent properties of the dialect itself. Several studies found that the urban dialect is usually associated with the speakers, who originally descended from Palestinian origins (Abd-el-Jawad, 1986; Al-Wer, 1991; Suleiman, 1985). The Fourth Circle protests were originally perceived as exclusive to the Jordanian Indigenous dwellers, who pursued their own vision of their national interest. As such, the Jordanians who participated in the Fourth Circle protests came from rural areas, where most Indigenous people live. Similarly, the online Jordanian activists deliberately updated their Facebook status messages by using their own distinctive dialect (i.e., RD), which revitalized their Indigenous roots and embodied their political views, as well as their cultural, ethnic, social, economic, and religious backgrounds.

Another justification for the frequent occurrence of RD, as compared to the low frequency of BD, was given by Al-Sughayer (1990). He considered Jordan's rural dialect to be "Fusha" (i.e., the standard Arabic variety), which translates "clarity of articulation," as compared to BD and UD (1990, p. 6). According to him, there is a possible historical connection between RD and MSA under the assumption that RD evolved from classical Arabic, and accordingly is a sister language to MSA. Therefore, in comparison to BD, RD is a standard spoken dialect that is commonly accepted and understood by all Jordanian speakers. Thus, it may be easily chosen for writing on Facebook and other social media platforms.

TABLE 2
FREQUENCY OF EACH DIALECT'S OCCURRENCE

| Type of Dialect | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Rural Dialect | 102 | 81.6 |
| Urban Dialect | 13 | 10.4 |
| Bedouin Dialect | 10 | 8 |
| Total | 125 | 100 |

Self-identification is characteristic of the ideology-based discourse of protests. In this case, the actors engaging in discourse described their identities (e.g., who they are, where they belong, what their characteristics are, and who their enemies and friends are). This is where "us" (e.g., the people) versus "them" (e.g., the government) can be found. The results showed that the pronoun "nḥn" (we) occurs 82 times across the data. This pronoun is commonly used to represent either the public, the Jordanian working class, or the Indigenous Jordanians.

Consider the following examples:

احنا اولاد الحراثين قلولي انتوا مين.

P.8. We are the sons of the plowmen. Tell me who you are.

احنا اولاد البلد بنحكي لهون وبكفي.

P.16. We are sons of this soil, saying it is enough.

نحن عامة الشعب ......

P.23. We are the public...

Throughout many of the posts, it can be observed that in-grouping is a common topic, in which the primary focus of the language is on "us" as the most significant element of the problem. This commonly holds the power to keep the audience's focus only on the in-group and influences their opinion to align with them—particularly, by emphasizing the complementary aspects of the in-group. For example, in P.8, the in-group is defined as "the sons of the plowmen, who have their own honest and distinct voice." In the context of Jordan, to be described as "the sons of the plowmen" usually means Indigenous Jordanians, who are typically from the farming and working classes of rural people, and in the case of this research, they are working-class people who tend to be marginalized and oppressed by their leadership. Therefore, in this case, the political in-group is comprised of Jordanian protesters who have organized themselves online and are active offline.

Hani al-Mulki's government is commonly represented in a negative light as the out-group, or "them." The government is described, both directly and indirectly, as being "out of touch, self-interested, dishonest, selfish, and lacking political efficiency" (see P.19, P.35 below). Several posts revived a debate over subsequent governments failing to spur economic growth and not taking accountability for it, as well as their misuse of public funds. Therefore, critical language is used to describe governmental action in many posts. For example, the government's activities can be described as being "floundering" (P.37), "thieving" (P.25), and "rubber stamp" (P.119), meanwhile their approach is described as a way to "agonize and rebuke the general public" or abandon them "to die in abject poverty and starvation" (P.33). These are many examples of the out-group being negatively portrayed and described as being "corrupt" and "rogue".

The Jordanian political decision makers tend to be defined as "negligent" and as those who "embezzle public funds" (P.122). Several of these activities are main topics or themes of various posts (P.111) and are employed to manipulate civic discourse, deceive people, and undermine the trust in Hani al-Mulki's government. For example, viewing governmental members as "people who steal the public's funds and therefore justify the protests" (see P.20 below). Other posts highlighted the abuse of power by politicians and other public figures for private ends. This reveals that the authors of these posts used their previous knowledge of the corruption record in Jordan. In the Jordanian context, it is challenging to identify who the "corrupt government" refers to, while the Cabinet members who are suspected of corruption and/or maladministration continue to have the support and protection of local tribal leaders.

'كل الاردن لازم تحتج وتطلع من بيوتها ضد الحكومة الي مالها دخل بشي ولا حاسه بالشعب المنتهي'.

P.19. All Jordanians must take to the streets to protest against a government that many Jordanians feel is unresponsive and out of touch with our daily struggles.

(ونشوف شو اخرتها مع حكومة السرقة انا بس بدي اعرف الحكومه شو بدهم بالضرريبه الزياده ؟! يعني همه يشفطوا واحنا نحاسب عنهم)

P.20. Let us see what will happen next with this government of thieves... why do they need to raise the tax? They stole, and we pay the price.

'الحكومة خلتنا على الحديدة بنستلم الراتب لنصرف عليها'

P.35. The government has honestly bankrupted us; I have nothing; I get a salary and spend it all because of the high cost of living.

'مين باعنا وباع كل شي عنا من فوسفات للكهرباء للاتصالات مين  مين ....مين ................... مين.... اكيد علي بابا وألاربعين حرامي ؟؟؟'

P.85. Who sold all our national resources and industries, from phosphate to electricity and telecommunication? Who? Who? Who? Certainly, Ali Baba and the 40 thieves.

'يعني كلنا عارفين انه هاني الملقي منزلش من السما وكلنا عارفين الي حطة وعارفين انه هاي السياسات اجته من فوق'

P.92. Hani al-Mulki [the prime minister] did not [parachute] from the sky. We know who brought him … and we know the policies he is adopting are imposed from above.

Due to the multiethnic and multinational identities that exist in Jordan between the East Bankers (i.e., Native Jordanians) and the West Bankers (i.e., Palestinian-origin Jordanians), identifying who the "us" refers to in this in-group is much more challenging and unclear. For instance, some opposed the protests based on their support of King Abdullah's regime and the potential economic benefit of removing bread subsidies and raising gasoline taxes. In contrast, there were a considerable number of posts from those who consider themselves to be "Indigenous Jordanians," and they must "get back their stolen country," (P.43) or they "no longer own the homeland" (P.122).

Those who supported the government's actions kept themselves at a distance from the protests' main activists since

several assumed that the government's economic policy could move the "country forward in sustainable development" (P.115) or was likely to "recover the economy" (P.112). Therefore, many of them are considered to be "government supporters," who tried to demotivate the protesters.

This is reflected in the posts below:

'بسراحة ، أنا مع   الحكومة الآن لدعم الاقتصاد'

P.75. Frankly speaking, I totally support what the Government is currently doing to recover the Jordanian economy.

'ارحمو...البلد. ارحمو.ارحمو الأردن  بلا مسخره كل واحد ع بيته'

P.115. Please, have pity on this country, enough of this charade. Return to your homes.

'برايي انه البلد تعبت لاجئين خلهم يدفعوا زيادة'

P.118. In my opinion, the country is full of refugees. Let them pay more.

'مشان الله لا تخربوا بلدكم شوفوا سوريا وليبيا'

P.121. For Heaven's sake, do not destroy your country. See what happened in Libya or Syria.

The posters of the above opinions chose not to identify themselves with everyone else by using "we". Alternatively, they referred to themselves exclusively using "I". This indicates that their opinions about the protests were personal in nature. However, some others saw the protests as superfluous. Their position mostly derives from their fear of potential bloodshed and the threats of these protests to people's lives and personal property (P.121) above represented that once he said 'do not destroy your country' as the Syrian and Libyan did.

*B. Linguistic and Discourse Strategies*

Some of the language and discourse strategies were used by activists online to define their activities and who they were—particularly, when negatively representing the Jordanian government. Governmental policy was described negatively, both implicitly and explicitly, using specific words (e.g., "thieves, out of touch, embezzlers, rubber stamp"). Negative actions were also motivated by certain discourse strategies. For example, the use of rural terms to label Indigenous Jordanians expressed Indigenous ethnic aspirations, as the initial image of the protests was to pursue "national interests". The use of the rural Jordanian East-Bank dialect helped the protesters intensify the public's negative impression of the government. For example, "sahij" (see P.97 below) is a person who blindly or unquestioningly follows the government. This term is used frequently by the rural Jordanian East-Bank speakers to stigmatize the government's supporters. Similarly, "btxzi" (P.113) is a colloquial, often rural Jordanian expression, which is commonly used by protesters to represent disgust and disappointment. In this case, this expression is employed to voice repugnance over governmental policies. Additionally, "ħrameh" (P.10) is a rural term for "thieves", which is used to describe the government.

' اولاد الحراثين وانتو اولاد الحراميةاحد نا'

P.10. We are the sons of the plowmen, and you are the sons of thieves.

'حذاء كل حراكي حر شريف . في فم كل سحيج ذنب واطي'

P.97. The shoes of all free honorable activists are in the mouth of all sheeple.

'والله احنا شعب كويس بس عنا حكومة بتخزي'

P.113. I swear to God, we are good people, but we have a disgraceful government.

Pronouns are another linguistic strategy used by the activists to manipulate civic discourse and mobilize the people. According to Allen and Faigley (1995), pronouns are the most direct representation of the actor (i.e., subject); therefore, any change in pronoun will inevitably affect the cultural construction and expectations of the subject. This study reveals that most of the posters deliberately used specific pronouns to refer to the government as "them". For example, "those thieves by which the Jordanians are presented as alienated or excluded from the authorities". This indicates that the Jordanian government is not on the side of the citizens (i.e., activists), who are referred to collectively by pronouns such as "us" and "we". As a result, the Jordanian government is constructed as acting against the Jordanian people, while the activists present themselves as the victims. Therefore, many of the posters were writing on behalf of the group via the pronoun "we", to underline the collective character of the protests (e.g., "We're not going to be silent"). Other activists aligned with this suggestion by forwarding the collective nature of the protests. By talking of their shared misery and happiness (e.g., "We are protesting here for a better future," and "We are partners in joy and sorrow"), collectivity is constructed and emphasized.

In addition to pronoun use, humor was used as a new online linguistic strategy for protest mobilization, both to promote activism online and as a powerful communication tool, thereby serving a true "weapon of the weak". For example, humorous posts mocking the Jordanian Prime Minister, Hani Mulki, were extremely prominent in the data.

Consider the following examples:

'هاني الملقي يا فاشل ... يا فااااشل  اغنيهااالك  حتى تفهمها'

P.5. O, failure; O, failure; Hani Mulki is a failure; shall I sing it to you so that you will understand it?

P.1. I heard that Hani Mulki Mubarak is ousted, so now I can do my shopping, haha.

'هاني الملقي، شو أخبارك شعب الأردن، حطك في دارك ... هههه'

P.17. So, what's up, man? Hani Mulki, I told you that the people of Jordan will send you to your home, haha.

Ambiguously humorous posts were used by the activists as a tool to provide relief from open or covert social and political pressures. As such, no one could be sure whether such humorous posts conveyed a serious message, or the poster was just making fun of the idea. Such posts are used to bolster fellowship among oppressed or marginalized

groups (e.g., the Indigenous Jordanians). Notice that in P.103, "We became like the Native Americans, but with no headdresses, haha". They described themselves as "Native Americans," which means the Indigenous Jordanians have become a minority among many Palestinians and refugees. Posting this humorous message expresses the fear of Indigenous Jordanians becoming a minority in their country.

Other protesters used proverbs to express their disgust. P.22 states, "هاي القشة الي قسمت ظهر البعير" which means, "This is the straw that broke the camel's back." Use of this proverb means the Jordanian people cannot pay all these taxes and still live in their country. They feel that Mulki's governmental decisions make their lives more complicated.

Similarly, P.25 states, "This government is leading the country into total chaos; they keep adding more taxes, while we have no services. We don't even have a decent transportation system. It's enough. Enough is enough." Her opinion represents the Jordanian people's disappointment. She focused on the poor services that the government has provided for the people—despite collecting a lot of taxes from them. Therefore, she was surprised by the actions that the government took to solve the corruption in the country. Using the word "enough" three times means that she won't accept solving governmental corruption with Jordanian money. Alternatively, the government must solve the problem by returning the corrupted money from the thieves who stole it previously.

P.17 reaffirms P.25 and asks, "They took millions of dollars, and where did it go?" This means the government got a lot of money from other countries, taxes, and other local resources, but they are still requesting that the Jordanians pay more taxes to cover the government's inefficient management. Therefore, the poster wanted to know how the government spent all this money, and on which projects the government spent it. The implicit speech showed that he didn't trust the government, and that the thieves would continue to steal the money, as they did previously.

The following participant's speech illuminates the Indigenous protesters. P.19 simply states, "We are Jordanian people. We are normal. We are not political. We go to the Fourth Circle to tell the government that we want a better life. We do not want new taxes." Saying, "We are Jordanian, and we are normal" means the original Jordanians are the main party within the country, and as such, they own it. Additionally, he uses the pronoun "we" to indicate that they are oppressed by the government because it has no solutions—except taking taxes from the citizens.

In 2018, the Fourth Circle protesters expressed their sadness over the government's performance. They wanted to say that there were no strategic plans followed by the government to guarantee a better life for the Jordanians. The first way of covering this gap is always looking for new taxes which are paid by them. Therefore, the protesters wanted to send a message to the government that they will not stop protesting unless they get their demands. The most interesting reaction by the Jordanian protesters was when they read the first post by the new Prime Minister Omar Razzaz who was appointed after Mulki. They didn't accept his tweets and continued in their mission because they felt that he used a hint strategy to modify not to cancel the income tax law. The protesters' reaction obligates Omar Razzaz to announce that this tax law has to be canceled and the government has to look for other solutions to get the needed money.

In conclusion, the success of the Jordanian Fourth Circle protesters can be summarized by three points: (1) They gathered a lot of Jordanian people to protest with them to express their opinion locally and internationally; (2) They obligated the two prime ministers to cancel the income tax, thereby achieving their demands; and (3) They made King Abdullah II aware of the problems they face with the government. They sent a direct message that they could not endure. King Abdullah II's reaction was made public when he sent his son Prince Hussain to meet the protesters and tell them that the king received the message, and he would do his best to achieve their demands.

The linguistic strategies used by the protesters attracted more Jordanians to join the movement. They helped them to make a very huge crowd which cannot be ignored and encourage their king to change the Prime Minister Mulki. Even the new prime minister felt that the posts and speeches of the protesters cannot be stopped if he didn't withdraw the income tax law. The direct usage of the pronoun they by the protesters is negatively concentrating on the management of government to solve the primary problems of the country. All of these evidences indicate that the impact of language power on the subjective and objective issues in people's life is so strong. Language can reflect users' identity, feelings, thoughts, believes, opinions, agreements, and disagreements for the life issues generally and their personal problems particularly.

*C. The Success of the Jordanian Protest*

The results of the Fourth Circle protests led Prince Hussain to meet the protesters and explain that King Abdullah II would follow up on their demands, which he said were merited. After a few days of the protests, King Abdullah II called upon Prime Minister Hani al-Mulki to resign because he could not solve the problem of the income-tax draft law. Then the King of Jordan assigned Omar Razzaz to be the new prime minister, and he insisted that he should fulfill the protesters' demands via negotiation.

The new Prime Minister of Jordan, Omar Razzaz, directly fulfilled the protesters needs by tweeting that he would discuss the new income-tax problem with the Jordanians to produce a new law that would be acceptable by all the Jordanian parties. Unfortunately, they continued protesting in the Fourth Circle because they didn't want any new taxes. They said the tax must be canceled by the new government. Once the protests continued, Prime Minister Omar Razzaz withdrew the new income tax and fulfilled the protesters' demands, as Majesty Abdullah II recommended that he do.

After the decision was announced by the Jordanian TV channels and newspapers, the protesters felt satisfied about the new governmental decisions. The new Prime Minster of Jordan also executed the protesters' other demands (e.g., returning the bread financial grant, decreasing product prices, and finding ways to reduce the cost of living to a more

acceptable rate).

## VI. Conclusion

This study has shown the extent to which Jordanians have used Facebook to execute and mobilize online protests. These new technologies have allowed free expression and social activism without repercussions—particularly in Jordan, where there are no current restrictions on communication using new media methods. Currently, the advancement of mobile-computing devices allows users to go online anywhere and anytime. The Jordanian activists used social media—particularly, Facebook—in notable ways (e.g., organizing, coordinating, and publicizing). This study's findings show that Facebook has been used both as a protest tool and a space for the Fourth Circle protests. It was possible for the Fourth Circle's activists to use Facebook to mobilize, strategize, and keep Jordanians updated with information. It was found that Facebook sustains both online and offline protests. If the economic policies and social injustices were kindling for the Fourth Circle protests, then Facebook was both the spark and accelerant for the movement. When Jordanian activists wanted to topple Hani al-Mulki and his government, they turned to social networks—specifically, Facebook. A few weeks before the street protest, an activist started the "m?nash" (we are penniless) page on Facebook to support striking workers. The page has drawn in more than 30,000 members, all of whom are concerned by issues (e.g., the country's poor economy) and frustrated with the government. Particularly interesting is of the deliberate use of the rural East-Bank dialect of the Jordanian Indigenous dwellers by the activists to inspire and motivate others to leave the comfort of their homes and go into the chaotic streets to face-off against Hani Al-Mulki's government. Consequently, the Fourth Circle protests successfully pushed for the government's resignation. Thus, this study confirms recent research on the impact of online protest activities (Amna, 2015; Chiluwa, 2015; Tufekci, 2017).

This study further revealed social media's potential to highlight different aspects of language use and ideological representation. Discourse strategies that highlight this include the use of rural terms, pronouns, and humorous posts. In the Jordanian case, the Indigenous dialect strategy was used by the protesters to express their objections and to highlight language to mediate its sociocultural context. It was used by the protesters to put pressure on the government by insisting they had rights as the original citizens of Jordan. They rapidly used this dialect in their posts to remind the government and the prime minister that it was important to listen to them because they had the power to gather the Jordanians in their uprising. They described themselves as "the sons of the plowmen" to represent that they were the original community who lived in the Jordanian lands before anyone else. However, they didn't mean they hated the other people who lived in Jordan; they only wanted to insist that they had rights and to express their negative opinion about the latest governmental decisions. Therefore, they used the pronoun "we" to indicate themselves as an oppressed people, and they used the pronoun "they" to indicate the negative party (i.e., the government).

Unfortunately, research that assesses the role of language in new media communication is very new in Jordan—especially that which focuses on the sociolinguistics and pragmatic nature of online discourse (Banikalef & Bataineh, 2017; Shaari & Bataineh, 2015). The current study inspires further research on the use of social media and alternate digital-media technologies in protests and social activism, as well as in interpersonal and intercultural communication via the use of local sociocultural resources. From the Jordanians' perspective, Facebook has gradually become the most widespread platform for social, political, and intercultural communication—particularly with the expanding public responses to religiopolitical changes.

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