

A Sociopragmatic Study of Instagram Nicknames Used by Open Educational College Students

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KEYWORDS: Nickname, Connotation, Open Educational College, Identity exploration, Pragmatics.



<https://doi.org/10.51345/v37i2.1324.g687>

ABSTRACT:

This paper attempts to investigate the various intentions and reasons beyond the Iraqi's choice of nicknames in their counts on Instagram. It aims to examine the types of nicknames created and their connotations. This current paper was adopted mixed methods research design to collect quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, respectively. Random sampling was adopted to collect data from 70 males and 30 females who are undergraduate students at the Open Educational College in Al-Anbar. Out of them, 20 students (10 females and 10 males) were chosen to participate in the semi-structured interview. The results revealed that the intentions beyond using nicknames on social media (Instagram) are the significance of privacy, identity exploration, and personal expression. The results also showed that learning a foreign language, cultural influence, and nature of the society, in addition to gender differences are the most central variables that have a greater influence on Instagram users' choices of nicknames. This implicates a desire for self-expression and freedom without any restrictions or fear of judgment or consequence. Finally, the paper might contribute to the existing literature of sociopragmatic by adding knowledge to context which conjugates the application of pragmatics on the social media, namely the Instagram.

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Introduction:

In the rapidly evolving landscape of digital communication, social media platforms have become a good space for linguistic creativity and identity construction. Above all, Instagram stands out as a space where followers create personalized nicknames that function as identifiers and nuanced expressions of self (Bader & Obeidat, 2020). For Iraqi students at the Open Educational College, in Instagram nicknames often carry layers of implicit meaning, reaching from cultural references and emotional conditions to social aspirations and interpersonal positioning. In addition, nicknames on Instagram have a tendency to be different from other in real life (Jadesi, 2022).

In the context of the Middle East, and exactly Iraq, the implementation of social media by colleges students presents a unique landscape for discovering linguistic and pragmatic phenomena. This study investigates into a specific, yet underexplored, characteristic of online communication: the implied meaning of Instagram nicknames utilized by Iraqi students at Open Education College. Nicknames, whether in offline or online contexts, are seldom arbitrary. They often convey layers of meaning, reflecting particular personalities, social relationships, cultural values, or desires. In the online realm, where non-verbal signals are generally absent, the choice of a username or nickname develops a potent semiotic resource, carrying implicit messages about the user's personality and their intended communicative stance. For Iraqi students, directing a complex socio-cultural environment while appealing with a global digital platform, the choice of an Instagram nickname is possible to be influenced by a rich tapestry of factors, as well as traditional naming conventions, local languages, religious affiliations.

While varied research exists on social media use in the Middle East and the larger field of pragmatics in computer-mediated communication, particular studies focusing on the pragmatic implications of nicknames among Iraqi university students on Instagram are limited. This gap in the literature requires a focused inquiry to understand how these digital nicknames function pragmatically, what implicit connotations they convey, and how they contribute to the virtual identity construction of this particular demographic. Understanding these degrees is critical for a comprehensive appreciation of digital communication applies in diverse cultural settings. The notion of linguistic implicature, mainly articulated by H.P. Grice (1975), states that

speakers suggest the implied meanings that are not explicitly stated in their utterances. These implicit meanings, or implicatures, are inferred by listeners based on shared assumptions about cooperative communication. They provide a strong framework for analyzing how these implicature arise. Although traditional linguistic studies have widely explored implicatures in spoken and written communication, its application to the unique communicative environment of social media, above all concerning naming conventions, remains an area prepared for exploration. According to Van der Nagel (2017), some Instagram users 'nickname' accounts simply to disguise the proper name of a person they know because they do not want to tell their true name, or in order to block other people from getting in touch with the account owner. There could be a number of reasons behind this. These options can conveniently lend themselves to a rich assortment of implicatures on the user's identity, motivations, and social connections.

This study aims to:

1. Investigate the various categories of nicknames engaged by Instagram users.
2. Interpret the linguistic implicatures conveyed by these nicknames choices.
3. State how these implicatures contribute to online identity construction and gender differences.

This current study assumes a pragmatic analysis of nicknames, discovering how Iraqi students apply linguistic strategies to hidden meaning beyond the literal. By highlighting the refined yet powerful ways in which Instagram nicknames communicate implied meanings, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of online communication, digital identity, and the growing nature of linguistic pragmatics in the digital age.

The purpose of this study is to explore and answer the following questions:

1. What are the common categories and characteristics of Instagram nicknames adopted by Iraqi students at Open Education College?
2. What pragmatic functions do these nicknames aid in the context of online identity construction and social communication?
3. How do implicatures contribute to online identity construction and gender differences

Literature Review:

The initiation of the internet and subsequently, social media, has deeply impacted human communication, giving rise to new forms of interaction and linguistic practices. This transformation has led to the emergence of a particular field of study known as virtual pragmatics, or internet pragmatics. Virtual pragmatics investigates the language of internet-mediated communication, highlighting on how meaning is produced, interpreted, and understood within digital environments (Al-Zubaidi, 2010). It discovers how users influence contextual information to bridge the communicative gaps that often rises in text-based online communications, where traditional non-verbal cues are absent. In recent years, social media platforms have impacted how individuals construct and present their identities. Online space offers a degree of activity in self-representation. Users can curate their digital identities through various means, containing profile pictures, shared content, and crucially, their chosen nicknames or usernames (Siregar, et. 2024). The vital characteristics of human identity, their names and often their nicknames, offer us with valued visions into how they are being witnessed by society and how they notice themselves as well. Nevertheless nicknames in real

life scenario were given analytical detail in 1998 by B.Fortado. He stated in his work, *“these monikers are found to have a wide variety of purposes: including among others, furthering social control, contributing to socialization, marking group boundaries, building camaraderie, catalyzing joking, conveying discontent, equalizing social exchanges and adjusting to labeling”*.

Wardat (1997) assessed sociocultural aspects of nickname usage in Jordanian Arabic. He discovered people’s sociocultural identifiers led to the creation of personal names. He argued people’s social rank, body traits, and occupation limited the selection of names. Additionally, it surfaced that men were more likely to have nicknames in comparison to women. He attributed this to the higher social status of women being more strongly protected in Jordan. In addition to this, Haggan (2008) examined names attributed to teenagers in Kuwait and reported that derogatory names, especially used among women, were more prevalent in public discourse. This was in contrast to the religious norms that advocate the opposite. In connection with this, Odebode (2012) also reported data collected from students. Odebode examines the Yoruba in Nigeria. He outlined the naming of pets in bigamous households as an ethnographic study. He used 25 names for his analysis based on Austin’s (1962) speech act theory. This showed the names derived from abusive illocution were used in playful contexts, serving other purposes during act naming.

Beyond assigning nicknames, it is possible to perform and accomplish various discourse functions, including directing, informing, recommending, and achieving. To conclude, referring to pets is highlighted as a vital means of communication, which is often employed by individuals within polygamous households in Africa as a means of retribution and a form of protest.

The study of nicknames across different cultures and their values, be they positive or negative, and interlingual interpretations, has drawn the attention of researchers. For instance, Jamalvandi (2016) studied the context of nicknames among Kurdish students in Ilami high schools. Using descriptive statistics, the study revealed that the participants relied heavily on people’s physical traits in the construction of nicknames. Also, the results showed that most nicknames had neutral evaluations, and positive and negative ratings followed, while the sexual dimension of role contributed little to the use of nicknames.

Regarding cultural specifics and the intentional meanings of nicknames from a pragmatic perspective, Akintola and Ayantayo (2016) studied the intentional meanings of nicknames used by Yoruba brides addressing their in-laws. Using interviews and the researchers' native intuition, they analyzed 21 nicknames. It is clear from the results that in this context, nicknames are used to praise, express concern, and insult.

Primary research on online naming practices relies on anonymity and pseudonymity in forums and chat rooms, where users could accept entirely new identities. Kamari, E. (2017). Though, with the rise of platforms like Instagram, which encourages connections with real-world communication, the dynamic has moved towards a more nuanced interplay between real and digital identities. Names on Instagram can change from direct representations of real names to abstract or creative handles, each choice carrying implications about the user’s desired level of privacy, authenticity, and self-disclosure. The pragmatic function of a nickname is not isolated but is intricately associated to the user’s overall digital communication strategy. Analyzing these functions offers valuable insights into how users manage their

identities and navigate social interactions in the difficult and dynamic landscape of digital communication.

As for the process of identity construction in digital spaces is inherently performative. Users actively choose what information to disclose, what images to share, and how to interact with others, all of which contribute to the impression they wish to convey. This curated self-presentation is not merely a reflection of an existing identity but an active process of identity formation and negotiation for young people, including university students, social media serves as a crucial arena for exploring and solidifying their identities, experimenting with different roles, and seeking validation from their peers Snoussi, T. (2024).

These previous studies are good vision and brilliant contribution to this research. However, the current paper goes further to examine the various intentions and reasons beyond the Iraqi's choice of nicknames in their counts on Instagram to convey identity and indirect messages. In the context of Iraqi university students, existing study mainly highlights the general impact of social media on their social lives. Many studies have examined the use of various social media platforms by Iraqi students for communication, information seeking, and even political activism Al-Rawi, A. (2024). However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the specific linguistic degrees of Instagram usage according to sociopragmatic perspective, mainly concerning the pragmatic functions of nicknames and their role in conveying hidden meanings and identity.

Theoretical Framework:

A Sociopragmatic and social media language study how language use varies in relation to social contexts and the social meanings conveyed through communication. This study highlights on the interaction between linguistic expressions and identities, social norms, and relationships in specific environments. In social media contexts such as (Instagram, language) particularly through features like usernames or nicknames function as a linguistic tool for identity construction, community belongingness, and social belonging. Language use on platforms like Instagram reflects broader social and cultural dynamics, adapting to the norms, expectations, and values of digital communities.

In the Iraqi sociocultural environment, social media language, including specific nickname forms, shows a crucial role in social communication. Iraqi nicknames on digital platforms communicates humor, difference, cultural values, and social criticisms, which are often embedded in nickname choices. Investigating these nicknames sociopragmatically needs attention to cultural and pragmatic norms that shape meaning in ways different from Western frameworks. These contain metaphorical expressions, indirectness, and context-sensitive semantic meanings relevant to Iraqi users' identities and social relationships. To analyze Instagram nicknames sociopragmatically, models such as Hymes' (1979) Ethnography of communication offer a useful framework by focusing on the communicative situation. Additionally, Grice's (1975) implicature theory allow for exploring the implied social meanings embedded in nicknames. These models help uncover how nickname use reflects negotiation of identity, social roles, and interpersonal relationships among Iraqi university students on Instagram. This theoretical framework offers a sociopragmatic lens to study how Iraqi university students use Instagram nicknames as social and linguistic tools embedded with cultural, identity, and community meanings. It mixes sociolinguistic identity theory, and communicative principles to guide analysis.

<https://www.randwickresearch.com/index.php/rielsj/article/view/204>

Methodology:

This paper has conducted two principal approaches: Quantitative and qualitative data. The mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches is used by researcher with the aim of recognize the world more completely. They realize positive value in both quantitative and qualitative viewpoints of human behavior. Besides, it can be seen that using only quantitative or only qualitative approach as narrow and incomplete (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p.33).

1. The sample

The researcher collected information on social media (Instagram) nicknames after selecting 100 participants as a sample because this sample was adequate to repeat the main patterns and themes in the usages. Random nicknames were adopted to collect data from Instagram users (70 females and 30 males) who are undergraduate students at the Open educational college in Al-Anbar, most of students at this college were females more than males, therefore most of participants were females. Out of them, 20 students (10 females and 10 males) were chosen to participate in the semi-structured interview. The researcher followed inclusion criteria because participants were vital to be undergraduate students joined at Iraqi universities, aged between 18 and 25, who used Instagram and conserved a personal nickname on this platform. Their Instagram accounts were identified through giving them to the researcher. The chosen nicknames are categorized according to, Alkhaldi, A. A., el at.(2023) classification pattern was established by the researchers through classifying the nicknames of males and females into developing themes.

2. Data Collection Instruments

The researcher utilizes two instruments: the questionnaires and interview in conducting the data collection for this study. For investigating the pragmatic functions of nicknames on Instagram, these tools were carefully chosen to capture both measurable forms and deeper insights into users' opinions on Instagram. The questionnaire items were ten which adapted from previously validated studies with a few modifications conducted by the researcher. The purpose of this questionnaire is to analyze the reasons that push Instagram users to pick their nicknames among students at Open Educational College in Falluja, English department. while the interview, it consisted of five questions to get information behind the using nicknames on such social media. Twenty participants selected randomly to participate in a semi-structured interview. This interview is perhaps the most conventional of data collection methods. In this vein, Burns (2010) emphasizes that interviews are commonly used means of gathering qualitative data. The researcher intentions at eliciting data from the participants with the aim of investigate what they say and, debatably, what is going on the mind of these students when using nicknames. Interviews are conducted to validate the findings of this current study that are carried out. The data is recorded by the researcher, then to analyze them qualitatively based on Grice (1975). The main purpose behind showing such a task is to explore the Instagram nicknames sociopragmatically used by Iraqi male and female learners. In order to minimize the risk to the validity of the used instruments, these instruments are sent to three experts, that is, three specialist professors at the University of Anbar.

3. Data Analysis

1. The Data Analysis of Instagram

The data analysis of this study resulted in 22 themes, which derived by analyzing the total of 100 terms documented in the nicknames of Iraqi's Instagram users. Table 1 below characterizes the nicknames types by the letter A to V, followed by realistic examples:

Table (1) A Comparison of The Percentage And Numbers of Terms' Frequency In Males And Females' Nicknames

NO.	Code	Nickname's Type	Example
1	A	English language Reference	English Teacher
2	B	Optimistic Reference	Sunny- Smiles
3	C	Pessimistic Reference	The queen of sorrows
4	D	Place Reference	The Bird of Baghdad
5	E	Time Reference	Zilzal
6	F	Color Reference	The black hand
7	G	Superiority Reference	Sense. owner
8	H	Social Relationship Reference	Abn- Alnbar
9	I	Reliance on God Reference	Al-aslam-dine
10	J	Aesthetic Reference	Sunset Baghdad
11	K	Ethical Reference	Pure-heart 22
12	L	Animal Reference	Lion of anbar.
13	M	Profession or career Reference	The doctor
14	N	Famous characters Reference	Nancy Ajram
15	O	Emotions Reference	al-romanci
16	P	Celestial Bodies Reference	The sun-moon 117
17	Q	Collectivism Reference	alarabiya
18	R	Natural phenomenon Reference	aurora music
19	S	Specific Action or Behavior Reference	Aggressive-king-offcl
20	T	Physical Reference	The eyes of deer
21	U	Flora Reference	Selleroftheflower
22	V	Miscellaneous	mazaj

It is important to note that frequent same nicknames were disqualified throughout the procedure of data collecting from Instagram for this current study. Nevertheless, for those Iraqi nicknames consist of two or more words, every word categorized and used for numerical purposes. Such as '*the black hand*' was regarded both color and physical reference-related; consequently, it was unified in the notes for two different types, signified by type codes: A and V. This way was followed to categorize the words in the 2.3.4 nicknames of male and female Iraqi Instagrammers investigated.

2. Interviews Analysis

The researcher has conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 males and 10 females Instagrammers, which is used frequently in a qualitative method. According to, May (2001) states that using interviews to obtain data permits the researcher to request participants about their views of certain social behaviors in specific contexts. In this vein, the insertion of the interview has permitted us to emphasis our questions about the use of nicknames on the social network of Instagram. Consequently, we have tried to gather in-depth answers about the

reasons behind using nicknames on Instagram to compliment and support the data gathered by the questionnaire. The interview involved five questions, in the first question the contributors were asked if they use their nick name or real name on Instagram, with giving us causes behind their choices their choices, the second question intended to know if they have been in a bad situation when using nicknames; in the third question, we needed to know if the contributors think that opening a Instagram account with a nickname make them feel more comfortable in expressing themselves and, expressing their views freely ; in terms of the fourth question contributors were asked to provide their views about using real names on Instagram by persons and whether it causes them problems, by giving us with examples. Finally, the fifth question was asked if married people use more nicknames?

4. Finding and Discussion

The analysis revealed that Iraqi females use nicknames on Instagram more than Iraqi males, with females using 70 nicknames. In comparison, males use 30 nicknames on their Instagram counts. This finding is in agreement with the results of Oceane & Maissa (2020), Al-Saidat (2023) and that females have more nicknames than males. However, this study is different according to a sociopragmatic perspective. This shows that the use of nicknames are varies across cultures, as Oceane& Maissa study was showed on Algerian speech community, and across time, as Al-Saidat study was showed in 2023. The interview with Instagram users reveal that they use nicknames for several reasons, for instance privacy, identity exploration, and personal expression. Their nicknames on Instagram reflect their learning a foreign language, cultural influence, and nature of the society, attitudes, deep feelings, or things they like.

4.1. Nicknames for males and females

This section states a comparative analysis of Iraqi males' and females' nicknames on Instagram. As stated by the findings, females are 11,42% more frequently than males to use words with "Profession or career Reference" (M) e.g. *The doctor* was the most frequently used in nicknames on Instagram followed by terms that have "Time Reference" (E) (e.g. *Zilzal*) at 8,57%. Moreover, males use words that have "Color Reference" (F) e.g. *The black -hand* at 7.14% and "flora reference" (U) e.g. *The selleroftheflower* at 1.42% more than females since those terms were not used a single time in females' nicknames. In addition, words that have "Reliance on God Reference and Aesthetic Reference" (I&J) e.g., "*Al-aslam-dine &Sunset Baghdad* were frequented in males' nicknames at 5.28% more than in females' ones at 3.33% (see Table 2 below). Besides," Animal Reference " (I) e.g. *Butterfly.arts* was frequented at 5,71% more than in females at 3.33%.

Nevertheless, terms that have a "Collectivism Reference & Natural phenomenon Reference" (Q&R) e.g., *al-Arabiya &aurora music* were used meaningfully more in females' nicknames at 6.66% than in males' ones which were used at 2%. In addition, words that have a "Pessimistic Reference &Place Reference" e.g., *The queen of sorrows &The Bird of Baghdad* same frequency in females' nicknames 3.33% than in males' ones which were utilize only at 2.82%. Additionally, the analysis illustrates that Iraqi females tend to use words that have "Superiority Reference or Social Relationship Reference" (G &H) e.g., *Sense. Owner & Abn- Alnbar* at 6.66%, "Specific Action or Behavior Reference" (S) e.g., *Aggressive-king-offcl* at 3.33%, and "Celestial Bodies Reference" (P) e.g. *The sun-moon* at 3.33% more than male's nicknames do at 2,82%, 5,71% and 1,42% separately. Notably, females in Iraq are 3.33% more possibly than Iraqi males to use words that mention to "Famous characters Reference" (N) e.g. *NancyAjram*. (see Table 2 below).

Significantly, the analysis of (100) data in Iraqi nicknames shows that words that have "Profession or career reference" (M) for instance, *The doctor* were the most repeatedly utilized in nicknames on Instagram among them at 10%, followed by expressions that have "Time Reference & Color Reference" (E&F) at 7%. In difference, expressions that have "Flora Reference" (U) e.g., *selleroftheflower* were the least frequently utilized at 1%, followed by "Physical Reference" (T) such as, *The eyes of deer*, "Celestial Bodies Reference" (P) e.g., *The sun-moon 117*, "Miscellaneous" (V) e.g., *mazaj* that had the same frequency at 2%. Captivatingly, the analysis also states that expressions connected with three types, they are "English language reference" (A) e.g., *English Teacher*, "Pessimistic Reference" (C) e.g., *The queen of sorrows*, "Place Reference" (D) e.g., *The Bird of Baghdad*, and "Natural phenomenon Reference" (R) e.g., *aurora music*,

"Specific Action or Behavior Reference" (S) e.g., *Aggressive-king-offcl*, were frequented: three expressions for every type and each constitutes 3%. Amazingly, the analysis displays that males and females extremely have a tendency to use expressions that have a "Superiority Reference" (G) e.g., *Sense. Owner*, "Social Relationship Reference" (H) e.g., *Abn- Alnbar* at 6% more than expressions that have an "Reliance on God Reference" (I) e.g., *Al-aslam-dine*, "Aesthetic Reference" (J) e.g., *Sunset Baghdad* at 4%. (It can be seen in table 2 below)

TABLE (2) The Comparison of The Percentage And Frequency Number In Males And Females' Nicknames

Code	Nickname's Type	Male		Female		Altogether	
1	A English language Reference	2	2,85 %	1	3,33%	3	3 %
2	B Optimistic Reference	3	4,28%	2	6,66%	5	5%
3	C Pessimistic Reference	2	2,82%	1	3,33%	3	3%
4	D Place Reference	2	2,82%	1	3,33%	3	3%
5	E Time Reference	6	8,57%	1	3,33%	7	7%
6	F Color Reference	5	7,14%	2	6,66%	7	7%
7	G Superiority Reference	1	5,71%	3	6,66%	4	4%
8	H Social Relationship Reference	4	5,71%	2	6,66%	6	6%
9	I Reliance on God Reference	3	4,28%	1	3,33%	4	4%
10	J Aesthetic Reference	3	4,28%	1	3,33%	4	4%
11	K Ethical Reference	4	5,71%	2	6,66%	6	6%
12	L Animal Reference	4	5,71%	1	3,33%	5	5%
13	M Profession or career Reference	8	11,42%	2	6,66%	10	10%
14	N Famous characters Reference	2	2,85 %	1	6,66%	4	4%
15	O Emotions Reference	3	4,28%	1	3,33%	4	4%
16	P Celestial Bodies Reference	1	1,42%	1	3,33%	2	2%
17	Q Collectivism Reference	2	2,85%	2	6,66%	4	4%
18	R Natural phenomenon Reference	2	1,42%	2	6,66%	3	3%
19	S Specific Action or Behavior Reference	2	2,82%	1	3,33%	3	3%
20	T Physical Reference	2	2,82%	0	0,00%	2	2%
21	U Flora Reference	0	1,42%	2	0,00%	1	1%
22	V Miscellaneous	0	0,00%	2	6,66%	2	2%
	Total	70	100%	30	100%	100	100%

4.2 The interpretation of the findings obtained from Interview

The interviewed contributors were ten, who answered the first question. They used nicknames when they created an Instagram account, to avoid social problems, and to express their thoughts, opinions and believes freely. One of them stated that he does not want to show his identity because he does not trust all people on social media. In addition, the findings also have shown that females are more likely to utilize nicknames than males, it is seen when they used a nickname (M) which is "Profession or career Reference " e.g., *the doctor* asserting that they loved that person and wishes to become like him or her one day. A pragmatic speaking, the implicated meaning of such type may indicate that a person being mentioned to holds a position influence or power, this serves to create a sense of solidarity and privacy.

According to second question, Interviewees had the same answer; none of them have ever been in a bad situation since of using a nickname. Two contributors added that they consider that it is a normal thing to do, and they said that it was a personal choice and no one got to judge anyone for that. They added that it is just a nickname that a person be fond of or implies something to them. Moreover, their interests in learning English language and their cultures influence, while choosing their nicknames, Therefore, their nicknames be appropriate to other communities.

Pragmatically, the use of such language in nicknames is approved by the majority as they are English students. The majority agreed that females be likely to use nicknames more than males, and they tend to use nicknames because they are restricted by social and cultural concerns. It is agreed with all nicknames that were written in English language this interpreted that selection learning a foreign language has an influence on Iraqi English students, this regard leads them to a name that fits to that language as their nickname. For instance, "English language Reference" (A) this type was used by females more than males e.g., *English teacher, the cute girl and princess*.

As for third question, Most of the interviewees answered (Yes) to this question, two of the students supposed that they can express their opinions freely because in such a way, they can avoid problems, another contributor said that Instagram is for self-expression this illustrate that using a nickname makes him or her feel more comfortable to express himself or herself, so that he\ she can overcome him \ her fear and anxiety. As it is seen types of nicknames in table (1) especially (F) "Color Reference" e.g., *The black hand, red flower and blue eyes*, which literally mean colors may enrich overall look and feel of such account, making it more visually attracting and appealing more instagrams' followers and engagement. This concerned that Iraqi culture is rich in colors and which can effect students to combine colors into their accounts as a way to stand their cultural identity and heritage.

In terms the fourth question, the interviewees agreed that the create real names on Instagram causes problems to Instagram users and gave us various reasons such as: social problems, threatening individuals, online bullying, stealing other identities as well as one of the students added that by using a real name, we can easily get tracked. Another student said that using real names on social media can limit Iraqi's student ability to express themselves without restrictions. Iraqi students may feel stressed to conform to societal opportunities or censor their posts in anxiety of judgment or criticism from followers. This can stifle individuality and creativity, obstructing their ability to correctly connect with others on such the platform. From this regard, the insertion of the interview has confirmed the results of the classification types

of Iraqi nicknames, when they use “Ethical Reference, Emotions Reference’ and Celestial Bodies Reference”

This implicated that females are more expected to use nicknames than males for cultural motives for instance, being in a conservative family made many females accounts to other users on Instagram, particularly if they do not let them to create account on Instagram. In contrast, some females are not permitted by their parents to utilize their real names, therefore they may have problems.

According to, the fifth question about nicknames used by married people, all the seventh males in the interview said “agree” that married people use more nicknames, because of Iraqi society, cultural identity, and to avoid social problems. The reasons are different, our participants have different views for instance, one confirmed that: “Married people do not like to be recognized by either individuals they know or by individuals who were their relatives in the past, as well as they frequently name their Instagram accounts by their kid’s or emotions names”. All of them saw that married people use their kid’s or emotions names. This agrees with classification of nickname’s types in the table 1 for instance, “Emotions Reference”(O) e.g., *al-romanci*. The literally meaning of such type refers to a feeling for instance, love, happiness, anger, or fear, though the linguistic meaning of this reference is a psychological state that includes expressive behavior or cognitive responses. Therefore, it may imply that emotions have an importance role in influencing behavior, interpersonal relationships, or construct identity, thus the identity of people is read through their use of a particular language, which is interpreted by others, through the employ of pragmatic influence, and adaptation for the purpose of changing the decoding of linguistic signals, consequently, the identity displayed by its person. In this manner, a person can show or hide parts of his personality and even create features to influence the decoding of individuality, through the language he uses.

5. Conclusion

Nicknames on Instagram play a significant part in self-presentation, and identity construction, they reflect parts of different identities or tendencies. In view of, this paper tries to investigate the various intentions and reasons beyond the Iraqi’s choice of nicknames in their accounts on Instagram. Thus, the results of the (quantitative) research in classification of nickname’s types illustrate that most of the Iraqi students, use nicknames to hide their online identities, or to stay away from social problems, and cultural concern e.g., learning English language. This regard leads them to select a name that identify that language as their nickname. while the findings of the (qualitative) research of the interview confirmed the findings of the classification nicknames’ types which gender appears as a major factor that impacts the select of the user’s nickname. Considerably, the analysis demonstrates that males and females be likely to use words that have a “optimistic reference” (B) more than those that carry an “pessimistic reference” (C). In addition, the study displays that “Profession or career reference” (M) is a type frequently used in male’s nicknames. Such as, the word “*the doctor, poet and singer*” were used 8 times, whereas this type was less used in female nicknames 2 times. Generally, excepting for the comparison between optimistic references and pessimistic references, the analysis illustrates that maximum of the nicknames used by Iraqi Instagramers convey positive views, it can be seen in the repeated use of the nicknames in the type “animal reference” via males, where words for instance *tiger, lion, , eagle, horse, and whale* were used, intended connotations of “strength, speed, pride, freedom, and courage,” furthermore to the females’ favorite of nicknames with “superiority reference” for instance, *Queen and Princess* are used via females. Depending on the above results, the choice of names by males or females

highlights gender-related differences in online communication, the Instagram in particular, at least in Iraq.

Appendix (1)

The Questions of the Interview

The following is a list of questions used in the interview.

Dear students you taking part in this study, which is about using nicknames on Instagram among Students at Open Educational College of Anbar, English department at Falluja. The data will be used for our research only; your views will remain anonymous. Thank you for your participation in this research.

➤ Core Questions

Q1. Did you ever use your real name before starting to use a nickname?

a. If yes, why you started using nickname?

b. If no, can you tell us what are the reasons behind choosing a nickname from the beginning?

Q2. Have you ever been in a bad situation because of using a nickname? If yes, how?

Q3. Do you think that opening an Instagram account with a nickname makes you feel more comfortable to express yourself and give your opinion freely? How

Q4. In your opinion, does the use of real names on Instagram cause any kind of problems to individuals? If yes, provides us with examples

Q5. Did you ever consider using your real name instead of a nickname?

Appendix (2)

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students,

You are kindly invited to participate in our survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to analyze the reasons that push Instagram users to pick their nicknames among Students at Open Educational College in Anbar, English department. We are interested in your personal opinion. Please choose the answer that you agree with the most. Thank you very much for your help.

We would like you to choose the right answer by putting an “X” in the box.

Section One: Personal Information.

1- Sex:

a- Male. b- Female.

2- Age:

a. 21-23.

b- 24-26.

c- 27 and more.

3- Level:

a- undergraduate 1. b- 2. C- 3. d- 4.

Section Two: Participant's Instagram Accounts and Username.

1- How often do you log into Instagram?

a- Always b- Very often c- Sometimes d- Rarely e- Never

2- Purpose of using Instagram?

a- Entertainment. b- To keep in touch with friends. c- Study purposes d- Gossip updates.

3- Which language do you use in your Instagram username?

a- Arabic b- English c- French

4- Is your Instagram user name:

a- Real name b- Nickname

5- For men, do you ever create Instagram account with female name? For women, do you ever create an Instagram account with male name?

a- Yes b- No

6- In your opinion what are the reasons that lead people to use nicknames on Instagram?

a- They don't like their real name b- Their names do not reflect their personalities c- Cultural influence d- Affected by a foreign name

7- Do you accept friend requests with unreal names?

a- Yes b- No

8- Who do you think tend to use more nicknames?

a-Male b-Female

9-Married people use more nicknames

a-Strongly agree b-Agree c-Disagree d-Strongly disagree

10- Using nicknames means having two different identities.

a-Strongly agree b-Agree c-Disagree d-Strongly disagree

دراسة اجتماعية تداولية لأسماء مستعارة على إنستغرام المستخدمة من قبل طلبة الكلية التربوية المفتوحة

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<https://doi.org/10.51345/v37i2.1324.g687>

المستخلص:

تحاول هذه الدراسة البحثية دراسة النوايا والأسباب المختلفة وراء اختيار العراقيين للأسماء المستعارة في حساباتهم على الإنستغرام. وتهدف إلى فحص أنواع الأسماء المستعارة التي يتم إنشاؤها ودلالاتها. تم الاعتماد في هذه الدراسة على جمع بيانات كمية ونوعية باستخدام استبيان ومقابلات شبه منظمة، على التوالي. تم اعتماد العينة العشوائية لجمع البيانات من 70 ذكرًا و30 أنثى من طلاب المرحلة الجامعية في الكلية التعليمية المفتوحة في الأنبار. ومن بينهم، تم اختيار 20 طالب (10 إناث و10 ذكور) للمشاركة في المقابلات شبه المنظمة. كشفت النتائج أن الدوافع وراء استخدام الأسماء المستعارة على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي (إنستغرام) تتمثل في أهمية الخصوصية، واستكشاف الهوية، والتعبير عن الذات. كما أظهرت النتائج أن تعلم لغة أجنبية، والتأثير الثقافي، وطبيعة المجتمع، بالإضافة إلى الفروق بين الجنسين، هي العوامل المركزية التي تؤثر بشكل كبير على اختيار المستخدمين للأسماء المستعارة على الإنستغرام. تشير هذه النتائج إلى رغبة في التعبير عن الذات والحرية دون أية قيود أو مخاوف من الحكم أو العواقب. أخيرًا، تسهم هذه الدراسة في الأدب العلمي الاجتماعي التداولي من خلال إضافة معرفة للسياق الذي يجمع بين تطبيق علم التداولية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، وتحديدًا على الإنستغرام.