



A Semantic-Pragmatic Study of Iraqi Slang Expressions in Local Online Advertisements

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Abstract

Like every other colloquial language, Iraqi slang reflects the cultural, social, and economic dynamics of its speakers. It is often used in informal contexts to convey humor, relatability, and authenticity. In recent years, advertisers have increasingly included local slang in their campaigns to connect with audiences on a personal level. This research paper aims to examine how Iraqi slang is used in online ads, studying its semantic implications, cultural and pragmatic relevance to the advertising and marketing settings. It is hypothesized that Iraqi slang expressions are widely used in cyber ads in a way that attracts the customers' attention, besides they reflect specific cultural and pragmatic indications. The researchers adopt Ibrahim and Ali (2024) model in analyzing the selected data to show the types and functions of the slang expressions used. The results show that Iraqi slangs are used effectively in local cyber ads to engage the receivers to a large extent, conveying semantic meaning beyond the literal interpretation of each word and strongly related to the context of situation. In addition, using slang expressions fulfills the functions of sarcasm and credibility. Fresh and Creative recorded the highest occurrence among the other types of slang, whereas to 'express impression' recorded the highest among the other functions.

Key Words: Semantic-Pragmatic Study, Iraqi Slang Expressions, Local, Online Advertisements



دراسة دلالية - تداولية للتعبيرات العامية العراقية في الإعلانات المحلية على الإنترنت

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المستخلص

تعكس اللهجة العامية العراقية، كغيرها من اللهجات العامية، الديناميكيات الثقافية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية لمتحدثيها. وغالبًا ما تُستخدم في سياقات غير رسمية لنقل الفكاهة والتواصل وعكس الأصالة. وفي السنوات الأخيرة، استخدم المعلنون اللهجة العامية المحلية بشكل متزايد في حملاتهم للتواصل مع المستهلكين على المستوى الشخصي. تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى دراسة كيفية استخدام اللهجة العامية العراقية في الإعلانات عبر الإنترنت، ودراسة دلالاتها وأهميتها الثقافية والبراغماتية في إعدادات الإعلان والتسويق. حيث تفترض الدراسة أن تعبيرات اللهجة العامية العراقية تُستخدم على نطاق واسع في الإعلانات الإلكترونية بطريقة تجذب انتباه العملاء، إضافة إلى أنها تعكس دلالات ثقافية وبراغماتية محددة. وقد اعتمد الباحثان نموذج إبراهيم وعلي (2024) في تحليل البيانات المختارة لإظهار أنواع ووظائف التعبيرات العامية المستخدمة. وتُظهر النتائج أن اللهجات العامية العراقية تُستخدم بفعالية في الإعلانات الإلكترونية المحلية لجذب المتلقين إلى حد كبير، ونقل المعنى الدلالي الذي يتجاوز المعنى الحرفي للكلمة، والذي يرتبط ارتباطًا وثيقًا بسياق الموقف. علاوةً على ذلك، يؤدي استخدام التعبيرات العامية ووظائف مختلفة مثل السخرية وإظهار المصادقية. وقد سجّلت تعابير عامية تتسم بالحدّة و الإبداع أعلى نسبة تكرار بين الأنواع الأخرى للعامية بينما سجل "التعبير عن الانطباع" أعلى نسبة بين الوظائف الأخرى للهجة العامية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دراسة دلالية-تداولية، التعبيرات العامية العراقية المحلية، الإعلانات على الإنترنت



1. Introduction

Attempting to define slang has perhaps blinded one to its essence. Slang is an informal language associated with a particular subculture or group, often viewed as nonstandard. Its meanings deviate from standard language meanings. It would seem simple and obvious enough: a word or phrase (more likely a phrase) will be slangy if it seems new; it may be dismissed as such if it seems old or familiar. According to Agung Sugiharto (2017), slang is a kind of informal language associated with the way people dress, music, tastes, attitude, or general behavior. Slang is mainly found in informal or casual talk, so people are careful in its use. Within this referential framework, one enters into a maze. Stating it in another way: slang relies on a division between what seems to be part of a language and what seems to lie outside or beyond it. Such divisions are subjective and changeable. The common use of a slang word presupposes that it had not been there before. The user's boast or unconscious response will be simple: 'It was bound to come to be.'

Aims of the Research:

1. Identifying Iraqi slang expressions in local online ads,
2. Offering a comprehensive understanding of the ways advertisers leverage slang language, to hook up with their target market,
3. Examining their semantic meanings and cultural implications.
4. Identifying the most widely used type of slang expressions.

Hypotheses of the Research:

1. Iraqi slang expressions are widely used in local online ads,
2. Advertisers strategically use slang to create a stronger connection with their target audience, increasing engagement and brand appeal.
3. Slangs carry specific and important cultural meanings and pragmatic associations.
4. certain types of slang expressions are used more than others.



Limits of the Research:

The research focuses on studying the semantic and pragmatic aspects of Iraqi slang used in Iraqi local online ads, exploring the significance and features of this slang in the specific context of cyber ads. Fifty ads will be examined to define the local slang used, and a semantic-pragmatic analysis will be conducted on the selected ads to uncover the nuances involved in understanding the meaning of this slang.

Significance of the Research

This research is considered as theoretical and practical contribution as it addresses a gap in the literature regarding studies that combine slang with semantics and pragmatics. In addition to shedding light on the pragmatic settings that affect the use of slang on online platforms. From a practical viewpoint, the research is seen as a significant addition to the body of research on Iraqi local online ads.

It examines the semantic and pragmatic features of Iraqi slang employed in local online ads. Because it incorporates both semantic and pragmatic perspectives in examining Iraqi slang in advertising, it could be significant to linguists in broader fields, including applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis.

2. Literature Review

Below is a list of five related studies that explore the use of slang, colloquial language, or cultural elements in advertising, particularly in Arabic-speaking contexts. Each study highlights potential gaps that can inform future research on Iraqi slang in ads.

1. Al-Rawi, A., & Khalil, M. (2022) The Role of Colloquial Arabic in Advertising Effectiveness. Journal of Marketing Communications

This study examines how colloquial Arabic enhances brand engagement in social media campaigns across the Middle East. It focuses on Egyptian and Levantine dialects but does



not address Iraqi slang specifically. The gap here is limited research on the use of Iraqi slang compared to other regional dialects, leaving a gap in understanding its unique impact on consumer behavior.

2. Hassan, L. (2021) Humor and Sarcasm in Iraqi Digital Media. Middle Eastern Journal of Cultural Studies.

This paper explores the role of humor and sarcasm in Iraqi digital content, including memes and viral videos. While it discusses linguistic features like "يا حرامي" and "شو ماكو", it does not extend this analysis to commercial advertising. The gap is not investigating how humor and slang are leveraged in marketing, creating an opportunity to bridge this gap by focusing on ads.

3. Al-Mosuli, S., & Ahmed, Z (2020). Youth Culture and Language Use in Social Media. Arab Media & Society Journal

This research analyzes how Iraqi youth use slang on platforms like TikTok and Instagram to express identity and belonging. It identifies terms like "كفو" and "زلمة" as markers of youth culture but does not examine their application in branded content. This study lacks a focus on how businesses adapt youth slang for promotional purposes, highlighting a need for further exploration in this area.

4. Mahmoud, R. (2019) Dialectal Variations in Arabic Advertising. International Journal of Advertising

This comparative study evaluates the effectiveness of Standard Arabic versus regional dialects (e.g., Gulf, Levantine) in TV and online ads. It concludes that dialects increase relatability but does not include Iraqi Arabic in its analysis. Its gap lies in the absence of Iraqi Arabic in such comparative studies, underscores the need for dedicated research on its role in advertising.



5. Al-Najjar, F. (2023). Cultural Identity and Brand Loyalty in Iraq. Journal of Consumer Behavior.

This study investigates how cultural identity influences brand loyalty among Iraqi consumers. It mentions the importance of localizing marketing strategies but does not delve into specific linguistic elements like slang. There is insufficient attention to the semantic and emotional impact of slang in fostering cultural identity and brand loyalty.

It has been noticed that there is limited research on Iraqi slang in advertising compared to other Arabic dialects and a lack of analysis on how humor and sarcasm in slang are applied to commercial contexts. In addition to the insufficient focus on the intersection of youth slang and branded content, an absence of Iraqi Arabic in comparative studies of dialectal advertising effectiveness and a minimal exploration of the semantic and emotional impact of slang on cultural identity and brand loyalty.

By addressing these gaps, it is hoped that this research can provide deeper insights into the strategic use of Iraqi slang in marketing and its implications for audience engagement.

2. Historical Overview of Slang

One might also position slang as the true Esperanto- the real international language, found in many languages, but a figurative one in the imagery that runs through all slang's varieties and in its role in communication. Not a myriad of idioms and dialects but a limited bank of words and phrases that, when used metaphorically provide an image that everyone who uses that language understands. The very narrowness of its thematic 'waterfront' is the best testament to its utility. The originally nautical metaphor means 'the scope of action; a region covered by something; surroundings, environment' and in the 1960s and 1980s slew into idiomatic use its more pejorative sense of no-good, riffraff, lowlife (Green, 2011).

The persistence of these themes and others ensured that slang lasts. Slang arose to deal with a particular set of topics; in a sense, it is how we think of certain topics and why, as will be



seen, such topics appear in so many languages. Slang is an ever-evolving, continuous process, and it flourishes wherever possible in a willing environment. Slang, like humor, is a possession and performance; thus, rules about order, duration, and mix apply but only until some breach, accidental or intentional, brings on a commanded laugh. Just as slang is casually plausible and yet, like humor constantly invents its latest empirical levity, slang is constantly producing new members. By far the greatest number of terms used to describe it rather than each other are produced in particular forms like the noun ambiguously described dialect plus language, code, or slang itself. Nevertheless, any number relating to the states of terms has exceeding value. Fittingly for something so slippery linguistically, national, but particularly language, counts are routinely achieved at many levels. Iraqis, especially the young, use slang to identify culturally and socially, creatively manipulating the Arabic language with specialized semantic-pragmatic functions.

1.1. Semantic-Pragmatic Framework

Semantic-pragmatic analysis refers to the simultaneous consideration of semantic and pragmatic aspects of meaning, emphasizing their interdependence and connecting them through the concept of context. This study adopts a semantic-pragmatic perspective, examining the semantic-pragmatic functions of Iraqi slang in local online ads. Aspects of semantics and pragmatics relevant to Iraqi slang will be theoretically presented, followed by a definition of semantic-pragmatic analysis. This study focuses on the slang used by Iraqi online advertisers, who craft ads as posts containing texts and images to promote goods and services.

The terms semantics and pragmatics are often used to give an account of meaning, and they have become key concepts in linguistics. Semantics has generally been understood as the study of meaning at the linguistic level while pragmatics concerns itself with how context influences that meaning (Setyawan, 2018). In other words, semantics is meaning and pragmatics is the use of meaning. While bringing up these terms in a discussion, it is



necessary to outline how these two concepts are distinguished and interrelated. In this respect, some models of meaning or accounts are discussed; namely, the referential, the ideational, the affective, the social, the prescriptive, the conative, the performative, the implicative and the transactional models in light of some theorists.

The semantic and pragmatic aspects of Iraqi slang in local online ads are discussed. The semantic discussion focuses on the specific and local interpretation given to those expressions. Considering the semantic and pragmatic aspects is crucial in such a way that these two dimensions work hand in hand to create an effective advertisement. On the other hand, the pragmatic dimensions of the analysis focus on relating the Iraqi slang in the ads to the context itself as well as the cultural aspects of the slang words used in the ads that enhance the persuasive power. Thus, tackling both the semantic and pragmatic aspects of Iraqi slang in local online ads is vital to have a full understanding of the ads and how they function in the local context.

The term "slang" refers to a group of colloquial words and phrases that have a specific contextual meaning and are often not located in standard dictionaries. Slang contains several connotations depending on the speakers and their contexts. Usually, using slang refers implicitly to the fact that the communicators belong to a group that takes advantage of a secret or protected way to communicate their messages. By using slang artfully, speakers are making a kind of performance. Good usage of slang is a high-wire act that shows the audience that the speaker is in tune with the times (Kozlovska et al., 2011). Slang is typically used in informal environments, such as communication between friends and same-gender peers, and is avoided in formal settings such as work environments and formal academic settings. When used in such circumstances, speakers may fear being evaluated negatively. Slang may also be avoided in online communication, as the weight and burden of the messages occasionally cannot be captured adequately in textual media alone. Most



lexicons of slang are in effect dictionaries of what will be omitted rather than what should be included (Kulkarni & Yang Wang, 2017).

Teenagers' choice of words does change depending on who they are communicating with, but all representatives of this age group are speaking the same language to each other. There are very few cases where slang is used to deliberately exclude someone from the conversation (Kozlovska et al., 2011). However, slanging is most effectively carried out among friends, as it draws upon the common social and emotional experiences of friendships. It can share a personal, emotional experience that would take several sentences to explain otherwise. This not only makes their communication more effective, but also strengthens their friendship. The use of slang in such a way sends the unstated message that they are friends, a kind of relational identity. Slang is not a different kind of speech, but a different way to express the same words. It is merely a playful exploration of the language that reduces the time spent on the boring facts of life, which otherwise kills the friendship.

3. Types of Slang

3.1. Regional Slang

Every speech community develops certain peculiarities in vocabulary, pronunciation and grammatical constructions. Where communities are separated from each other by distance these differences tend to become more marked. Widespread differences of this nature may constitute dialects. More local peculiarities usually known as sub-dialects or accents may exist within a dialectal area. This division of language into regional varieties is called diatopic variation.

Foreign vocabulary is sometimes regarded as a type of slang. This results from the fact that newcomers freely appropriate a word for their particular use, and in doing so often alter its pronunciation, spelling, or meaning to suit their own phonetic or mental preferences. Such a word affords amusement and is easily identifiable as foreign. The same element in a



different accent or naturalized in English is no longer a word of slang. Most differences of dialect fall into this category, being instances of this naturalization of foreign vocabulary. Such wit is ephemeral. The borrowings of foreign words are extended and perhaps modified, but seldom wholly lost to one dialect. An Englishman will occasionally indulge in the temporary mode of speech of a Scot, and vice versa, but neither will permanently inflict his accent upon the other's speech. Dialect introduces difficulty of communication. Slang is a normal use of intelligible language between people of opposite degrees of talking ability in the presence of an outsider. Slang tends to develop in circles and retreats from outside understanding. (Din et al.2025)

3.2. Social Media Slang

As social media starts to progress, so do the terms used in the media. The "Y" generation (youth), or often called "digital natives," tends to use social media in their daily communication. Slang language has spread widely as a language variety. Social media is a combination of various forms of media that connect people for communication, entertainment, and other purposes. SMS, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and messaging applications are examples of social media that are widely used by students and other people to contact friends, parents, or other people. The rapid exchange of information in social media applications makes it easier for someone to gain access to various news reports, information, and live coverage. Consequently, the slang terms usually and often used in the application do not take long until they are adopted as standard terms. (Agung Sugiharto, 2017)

3.3. Youth Slang

Youth slang is a non-dogmatic approach to youth language that prioritizes the diversity of non-standard vernaculars around the world, illustrating underlying similarities in their social uses, historical retrievals, linguistic structures, and rationalities. Slang is a popular variety



of a language that is often colloquial, is more or less restricted to a particular group of users, and whose expressions may be unintelligible to outsiders. It is mostly distributed by adolescents and is used in both writing and speech. Youth slang is a type of slang used by adolescents that differs according to time or social group and is constantly replenished with neologisms. Aside from the age of its speakers, it has no special characteristics in terms of content and form. There is a great variety of youth slang, which changes rapidly, creating a 'new' version of a language, either temporary or permanent.

In a general way, it can be defined as the informal lexis used by a group that is usually restricted to it and valued as a distinguishing mark. Slang is often regarded as an inferior form of language, but this is misguided. With its involvement in innovation and creativity, slang can be considered a living part of a language that enhances its expressiveness and enjoys great respect among speakers. Slang is also a mirror of society: it reflects the evolution of humanity. Crude, obscene, and vulgar expressions are common in almost all languages in all periods. Similarly, slang may be the source of lexical evaluations that later become negative.

Slang is a supple and polysemous entity that leads to misunderstandings and misconceptions between laypeople and academics. Whereas in the latter youthful language is often treated as an exotic property of a small, often marginal group, in the former it is sometimes regarded as a generic and highly pathological phenomenon dangerously influencing the language of the 'normal' talker. Sociolinguistic literature typically investigates youth language as a style that recognizes as valid the terms used by the individuals that it names. Youth language is contrastively put in relation to other semiotic resources, making it analytically coherent but at the same time unimaginable and unintelligible (Salvador et al.2024).

3.4. Professional Slang



Manurung et al. (2022) state that professional slang is an inevitable and inescapable part of professional activity that infuses various fields of work. Professions inherently create groups of individuals who possess similar interests and skills, united by the specific conditions and nature of their work. The use of specialized spoken and written jargon serves as a crucial barrier to entry into these groups of people, who are all engaged in performing the same professional duties, while simultaneously protecting their professional secrets and the unique knowledge that governs their practices. This professional jargon not only forms an identity for the group but also plays a vital role in securing that identity while assisting in managing their collective secrets. Such specialized slang is often challenging to master and is understood primarily by a limited number of individuals within that profession. Moreover, the continuous development of job technology often leads to the creation of new terms, phrases, and words, which greatly facilitates communication of a professional character. Additionally, phonetic changes may occur to the existing words, which can enable them to acquire entirely new meanings and sounds, further enriching the professional lexicon and enhancing the way professionals communicate within their respective fields.

With an extended propagation and functioning of professional argot, some of the terms become common words and replace existing ones, losing their original meaning. Such slang is especially developed in the field of sales, mid-range sales, restaurant business, tourism, banking sphere, catering business, etc. Choosing arguments for their translation is determined by the reality and by the needs of modern life. Contemporary reality is dominated by new means of communication taking over the whole world, forming information society, increasing the economic scientific and other losses in the form of financial and intellectual capital, hundreds of thousands of people worldwide per second, while independent countries and business groups spending billions of current currency for the protection of national components of lands, technologies, and know-how.

3.5. Cultural Slang



Cultural slang can be most readily thought of as the words that stand for elements of people's culture. Words can allude to food, clothing, tradition, and customs that provide people with a lifestyle that is easily understood by their companions. One cultural slang word would be "Pashka". For those who have never been acquainted with it the word has little meaning but to people of Russian heritage, the word stands for a richly decorated, fruit-studded cheese molded into a pyramid and served at Easter. The elements that make up cultural slang can be separated into three groups, each of which are broad topical categories. One type of cultural slang refers to elements of one's culture that are commonplace or commonly known. These slang words can be regarded as more socially or culturally neutral. For example, "Borscht" is a Russian or Ukrainian soup consisting of tree-hued beets and served hot. It is common enough knowledge to invite any number of definitions, and it is certainly culturally significant as a national dish.

Another type refers to more unique elements, and usage can provide a special link between one speaker and a group that knows of the element and its significance. Ideas, thoughts, and references can be blatantly cultural and even idiosyncratic. Spencer's idiosyncratic use of "povielitzya" is an example of this. The significance of the word as it refers to a specific incident that can draw people's minds to a certain situation while those not acquainted with the event only know a word. Cultural slang is also an element of an ethnic culture's identity. It is something about which languages can be compared. It is inherently tied to all other spoonerisms, puns, wordplay, metaphors, idioms, and onomatopoeia (Kozlovska et al., 2011). If one is unacquainted with the culture, even perfectly spoken idiomatic sayings can lose their meaning. Hence, cultural slang cannot be easily translated.

Often, it is necessary to invent a new eveniloquent expression that has an analogous effect to be understood, because only then it becomes possible to obtain the full meaning. There are also accidental or faux amis. More often than not it is impossible to find an antonym. A



cultural untranslatability can relate with a cultural aspect in one culture that does not exist or is entirely different with the other culture (Kulkarni & Yang Wang, 2017).

4. Functions of Slang

In considering the slang of a group or period, it is essential to keep in mind that term. In this type of vocabulary there are recognized lower end limits, or languages, for want of a better term, whose lexicon and phraseology are too vapid or too obvious to warrant inclusion: these would be the current, at any moment, 'street' term for beautiful/handsome, stupid, angry, etc. Equally, words or terms like those enumerated above would be too wide for inclusion. As such, they were too every day, or universal, to qualify as slang. In the lexicon of Transatlantic ('American') English these would include, amongst many more, phone, stupid, cool, bad (in the sense of good), sucker, kid, etc. Mentally, the search for the above examples tends to revert to similar abrogation in the sphere of finding stupid, ugly, and pretty. By the same token, no collection would ignore what was recognized as 'normal' dialect words or phrases, or be based on what was regarded as 'Standard' English. Everything else constitutes slang proper, unrecognized dialect or phrase, in the sense of a neo-language, buried and hidden (Green, 2011).

When people speak, they usually act socioculturally. They don't simply produce codes to express a thought physically, but verbalize understanding capabilities about what they are talking about. That means they are always communicating their identity. Using slang artfully shows that the speaker is in tune with the times, pays attention to the various slangs the media spreads, and is skillfully adept at using the slang that's appropriate to the time and place. The deliberation to borrow, create, and use a slang reflects a considerable degree of speaker's competence.

Slang is used in informal environments. Those who fear a certain form of social backlash usually avoid slang. Knowing when to be formal, being casual, and making fun at the right



times allow a person to function as normal beings in society or its respective subcultures All Slang speakers scrutinize their communication partners when they make the choice to use or avoid slang. Schools who speak slang don't necessarily use it to exclude people who don't understand it.

The use of slang is condemned if it's used to alienate or deride the ignorant. As such, slang is a means to cement bonds, to form the ties that get the groups to coalesce and see each other as 'us' vs. 'them.' Slang is most effective when spoken amongst friends simply because it reveals an awareness of common social and emotional experiences not generally available to outsiders. Slang terms may at times be nothing more than efficient, shorthand ways to refer to things. They may express shared ideas or feelings succinctly, while at the same time containing a host of other meanings, histories, or connotations. Using slang asserts an unstated message that 'we're friends', or to put it another way, 'a kind of relational identity'. (Kozlovska et al., 2011).

4.1. Identity and Group Membership

Slang serves as a means of identification for those who are members of a particular sub-group, such as the youth, sportspeople, thieves, gay men, and drug addicts. These individuals use language to exclude non-members and construct a sense of group solidarity. They use jargon or lexicon typical of the in-group to identify each other and establish status. Some individuals, who wish to be included in the group, adopt the style, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cadence of speech that will allow them membership. These mechanisms have been recognized and investigated by Ethnolinguistics (Hoyt, 1996).

The linguistic signs of claims of group membership and community solidarity are recognizable in two instances. Firstly, a specific language or variety-even one generally low-prestige, as in the case of the rural dialect described above, may be used to show membership in a group and to distinguish a group from people outside it. Such an 'identity'



marker is something that is featured in various public domains. Language was a central issue in ethnic violence in former Yugoslavia, in acts of aggression approximating the place of articulation of various sounds, and in attempts at discrediting each group's national myth. Ethnolinguists have convincingly shown how implicitly and explicitly, and through the differential indexing of consonants and the already mentioned long /a/, the image of 'us' was constructed, with 'them' cast in a negative light. Claims of identity are therefore not exclusively verbal, and the referential indexicality of language does not have to be overtly at issue.

Secondly, membership in a group can be displayed through a stylization of language—more specifically, through the adoption of a semiotic system from a different community and the re-distribution of its linguistic resources in a context which is not its native use. Linguistic signs here illustrate group solidarity from the perspective of those already 'inside' the group; stylistically deployed, as with the case of gendered speech, they index group membership and solidarity with 'in'. Through the adoption of the code from the linguistic repertoire of 'us', a stylization may thus act as a recognizable claim of identity as well as membership in the group. (James, 2022)

4.2. Expressiveness and Creativity

Green (2011) indicate that it is a commonplace that slang is a creative form of language. Creativity, along with expressiveness, is slang's most important function, central to who speaks it and why. Slang's expressiveness allows speakers to present a specific version of themselves, in much the same way that description and imagery allow poets to say what they want to say. For example, the Dockers' Docklands slang is defined by many direct references to specific local places. Further, many slang terms convey strong emotional imagery. The flat could be described as a 'murder', which means 'extremely bad'. Other slang terms convey strong positive imagery, such as the expression sea view, which refers to one's partner's imminent infidelity.



The creative use of imagery in slang also contributes to expressiveness. For example, a lover may be described as a ‘scraps and muck’, which refers to a dirty lover. On the other hand, the identifier downer is used to describe anything that elicits sadness. Additionally, low IQ stupidity may be mockingly represented as ‘dumbness in charge of conscience’, or *dolos*, a sneaky, deceptive, or duplicitous person. Slang creativity often takes the form of punning or structural composition. For instance, slang’s expressiveness often matches a semantic signifier to a phonological signifier, merging two terms into a new one that shares characteristics of each. Many examples have been published, such as ‘badatrip’, ‘godhelp’, ‘skumsnum’, and more.

Creativity, process, or collocation whereby one smaller term is embedded into a larger term, in such a way that the larger term’s new argument or adjunct in syntax is derived from the smaller terms in forming it. One term can be composed of a larger unit of several words. Alternatively, several smaller units can be expressed in the same larger term. For instance, many business titles begin with words like ‘principal’, ‘general’, ‘senior’, and ‘assistant’, and news analysts are sneered at for providing ‘the news from the news’.

4.3. Humor and Playfulness

Slang is often associated with humor. When people hear a new, funny slang term, the first and most common reaction is to laugh. Because of this, slang can also be a topic of conversation and a powerful tool for social relationship building. Also, slang can indicate many things in social interactions, indicating the speaker's involvement in the ongoing conversation. On the other hand, if a person does not understand a certain slang term, they may feel alienated from the group the person speaking slang belongs. For this reason, some slang terms that are humorous when they are first coined in social contexts, if they become too viral, lose their humor and interest. Largely due to this reason, slang needs to be constantly created in social groups.



7.2. Interpersonal Relationships

The language of youth, especially teenagers, is a subject of great interest for linguists. The new slang words, unusual pronunciations, clever wordplays, neologisms, different syntactic structures, and repurposing of old words practically always find a place in the popular newspapers with specific reference to youth culture. Even among the non-linguists, curiosity about what adolescents mean by certain lexical items is not uncommon. Many attempts from interested laypersons to elucidate the meanings of terms such as ‘guy’, ‘duh’, ‘cute’, and ‘pants’ abound (Moore, 2014).

In their early adolescence, children adopt a wide variety of social and cultural happenings that cannot be comprehended by older adults, much less the younger children. They adopt the usage of certain lexicons quite outside the knowledge of adults. The reasons for the adoption of a separate language style are both social and psychological. It is ‘to assert their identities in a distinctly new public social role’ and ‘part of a larger social struggle in which those in power exclude, demean, and refuse membership to those without it’. It is a language ‘for those who are in the ivory tower, who are on the outside looking in’. Youth slang also expresses one’s group membership. Slang, in its lighter, friendly, ultimate form often improves, enhances and vivifies, vigorous, hearty, good-natured brook side equality, in fact, egalitarian solidarity. The fellowship stretches out in recognition, a welcome embrace. Paradoxically, but truly, slang is the language of far more indirect behavior than polyvalent language. The crowd the word slang encompasses is a curly, bushy crowd that knows not what it means, except with some precision probably in each particular instance.

8. Challenges of Slang

The Internet is a vastly global, diverse, dynamic, and complicated hypertext environment which serves as a new social context for individuals and groups to conduct daily communication and express their thoughts, information, and feelings (Kulkarni & Yang Wang, 2017). Reflecting this variety and diversity is the language of the Internet, which has



drawn increasing attention of linguistics researchers. One aspect of this language diversity is the abundance of slang, which has attracted little attention from the linguistic community (Green, 2011). For some, the essence of slang intertwines with its social contextuality, which does not fit naturally into the controlled framework of sociolinguistics. The rise of the Internet and social media services has transformed these social contexts; they are no longer just face-to-face, co-located, or private contexts. Instead, many connections and conversations are public and predominantly in written form. As observed in 1994, “as cyberspace becomes vast, borderless, and anonymous, an even more diverse and creative language is developed”.

Initially confined to a certain social group, early Internet slang quickly proliferated on public online forums, blogs, and social media in its written form. It differs from traditional written slang in that Internet slang has a greater diversity of users and contexts of use, and it is now often populated by people who are not friends, who are not in direct relations offline, and who may never meet in the real world. At present, there has been a substantial amount of literature on Internet slang, covering a diverse array of topics. Nevertheless, most fail to describe Internet slang quantitatively or to analyze it from different perspectives. Without systematic research, slang is still a quite vague concept for many linguists. It is common to have a list of words or phrases and a set of examples in discussions about slang, but it is difficult to characterize it more explicitly. Grounded on a large-scale data collection effort from the Internet, the research aims to quantitatively characterize slang from its linguistic and social aspects.

8.1. Misunderstandings and Misinterpretations

One variety of language that has often been the subject of misunderstanding and misinterpretation is slang. Misinterpretation is one of the litany of concerns regarding language. So it is with slang, that awful specter of sloth as it was once referred to. It is relatively rare that new words are added to any language. New words, except when they are



coined by the vernacular variants of languages, are usually the result of the appropriation of an already constituted word, one already in existence elsewhere, and taking it into everyday use with a modification or a separation from its core that results in a new meaning. Such processes happen in languages. It is common to hear French derivative additions to English, like *souplineilet*, have now been picked up by non-French speakers. Such scenarios give rise to misunderstanding and in some cases misinterpretation. Such misunderstandings happen not just in cases of foreign exchange, but frequently when the same word is wrenched from its coinage. (Bramlett, 2002)

There exist terms which have taken on most localized in-group emphases. Cases from American English abound, terms like ‘jit,’ ‘queer,’ ‘white boy,’ when employed carefully and properly in a given community better described subjectively than phonetically. On the other hand, there are slang terms that have been selected from the pages of illicit texts by a given out-group, taken on their knowledge of the local in-group, generally circulated and with incidental changes segmentally stripped to their base core.

Such terms, better well translated and inculcated with neutral connotations of time and space, likely to be understood by most, in the more technical studies of language, are better described as slang, jargon, or argot depending on inclinations. Each has a similar core lexical meaning as a vocabulary sub variety choice that bespeaks formality or informality, or high or low tone, a term to describe both slang and terminology. However, since the derivations of both terminology and jargon are better constrained to be terminological choices of specialist vocabulary in technical fields, taking on new forms in formal settings, especially academic, with bouts of notice sometimes taken of jargon by a technical in-group.

3. Data Collection and Methodology

To ensure accuracy and reliability, the following steps were taken:



3.1 Data Collection

The data of Iraqi local online ads that include Iraqi slang was collected from 25 online ads posted on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube platforms. The ads were randomly selected from one of the publicly viewed groups. Iraqi local online ads, including Iraqi dialect or slang, were selected. The selected ads were posted in March 2023. The chosen timeframe for data collection is to view the most up-to-date ads so that the findings can reflect the current slang usage in Iraqi local online ads. The sources of the data rely on Official brand pages on social media and publicly available campaigns shared by influencers or brands. These ads included both small businesses and larger companies, with some promoting goods or services personally, while others used agency services. Engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) are supplied.

The data comprises 50 online ads collected from the popular Iraqi Facebook page "بزار" bazar, which features various goods and services for sale. Ads in Arabic using Iraqi slang are selected for analysis to examine semantic-pragmatic variation and change. Iraqi slang is considered an advertisement language variety, focusing on its semantic-pragmatic functions. It aims to determine the semantic-pragmatic functions of Iraqi slang in local online ads and describe how Iraqi slang conveys specific meanings beyond the standard Arabic language.

3.2. Research Methodology

A qualitative research method is conducted to investigate Iraqi slang used in local online ads. It is used as a systematic method of selecting, collecting, and analyzing data, to produce reliable results. Care is taken to ensure that these ads represent a larger pool that feature Iraqi slang. The analysis highlights the strategic use of Iraqi slang in ads, emphasizing linguistic features, cultural relevance, and audience engagement across the 50 online ads.



3.3. Model of Analysis

This study adopts Ibrahim and Ali (2024) model of analysis, merging Allan and Burrige (2006) and Burdova (2009), to identify the types and functions of slang expressions used in the selected local ads. The following figure illustrates its components.

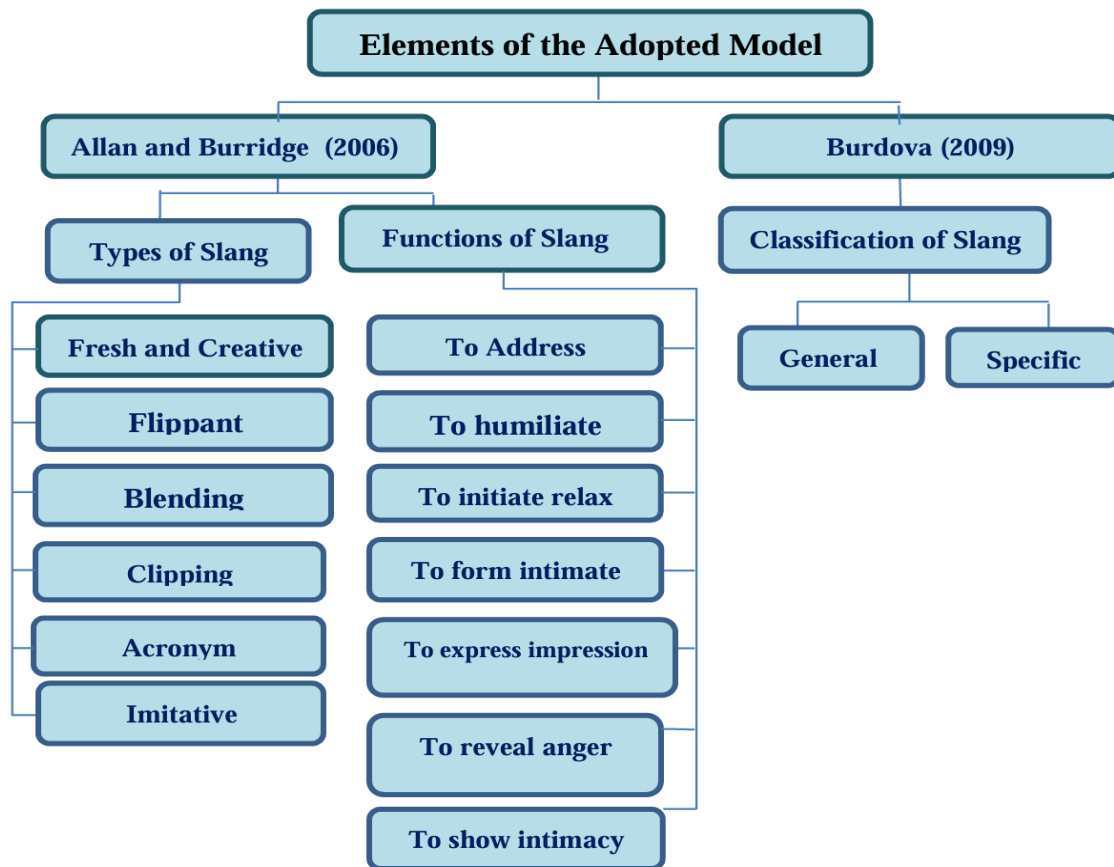


Figure 1 Model of Analysis

3.4 Data Analysis

To establish the nature of semantic-pragmatic functions, local online ads that employ Iraqi slang were collected and analyzed 50 textual ads from various social media platforms were chosen for analysis. Examples of Iraqi slang that appear in online ads are chosen as data for analysis. Iraqi slang is defined based on its sociolinguistic features and typology, taking into account the ambient aspects. The analyzed data focus primarily on the textual coded mode,



which is the written language in the form of Iraqi slang used in online ads. It is worth noting that some ads contain exclusively Iraqi slang, while others mix slang with Standard Arabic or English. For clarity, only those that contain solely Iraqi slang have been selected.

Iraqi slang is analyzed semantically and pragmatically. The semantic analysis examines how the context in which Iraqi slang items appear determines their meanings, which may differ from their dictionary definitions. The pragmatic analysis applies a speech act approach to uncover the implied meanings of Iraqi slang in particular contexts, beyond their literal meanings. Both analyses illuminate how Iraqi slang conveys indirect meanings in online ads that attract more attention and interest from the audience through the functions they fulfill. The interpretations are based on the contexts in which the data were collected and the researchers' background as a native speaker of Iraqi Arabic. Other native speakers may interpret the same slang differently in various contexts. Hence, attempts are made to provide the most reasonable interpretations of the data.

From a semantic and pragmatic perspective, the slang expressions analyzed were collected from a marketing platform, primarily centered on buying and selling themes within a commercial context. The following analysis explores these expressions in detail to highlight their semantic and contextual functions as follows:

3.4.1 Semantic Analysis

Each slang expression has its semantic meaning that may differ from the regular semantic meaning as follows:

سعر نار - A dramatic phrase implying a hot deal or great value.

كسر بالسعر - Suggests the price is greatly reduced; often used for discounts.

بالچفجير - Used to exaggerate abundance, e.g., "sells rice in bulk."



محروكة عليه – Indicates strong attraction or popularity of the item.

تفليش – Means total clearance or drastic markdown.

بيعة حظ – Indicates an unexpectedly great opportunity; implies the buyer is fortunate.

باب أول – 100% top quality- used to confirm product quality. Builds trust in item quality; means it's original and high tier.

خوش سعر – “Khōsh” is Iraqi praise; makes the price sound attractive.

بالخمسين – Highlights affordability by stating minimal price.

ماتلحك – Suggests the item is in high demand and will sell quickly.

سعر خرافي – A fantasy price—amazing deal, too good to be true.

ما تلگه بالجمله – "You can't even get it wholesale"—means very rare or cheap.

شغل نظيف – Describes high quality or pristine condition.

للطاكين – For serious buyers only—used to filter unserious inquiries.

عالسوك – Price negotiable via bidding; flexible, informal and relaxed tone.

حجي زلم – A man-to-man talk—respectful, fair, non-negotiable.

ما ينوصف – Too amazing to describe—used to emphasize the product's excellence.

بس للغوالي – “For dear ones only”—intimate, culturally warm phrasing.

سعر نهائي – The final price; usually very low or non-negotiable.



خوش فرصة – A great chance not to be missed; welcoming tone.

ما يتفوّت – “Unmissable”—often used to encourage immediate action.

مكسر السوق – “Hot and breaking the market”—very trendy or in-demand item.

عامل بالمعقول – Bid reasonably; implies openness but not desperation.

اخذ وادعيلي – “You’ll pray for me after buying this”—implies great value.

جيبه عالسريع – Wanted urgently—usually appears in buyer posts.

شغل ستاند باي – Ready-to-use—no setup required.

متروس مالات – Loaded with features or accessories.

يرهم للخطر – “Perfect for guests”—used to promote quality and hospitality.

ما ينشبع منه – So good you won’t get enough—typically used for food or cozy furniture.

مبين عليه مرتب – Clearly premium or first-class—appearance shows its worth.

يستاهل كل فلس – Worthy every penny—used to justify a higher price.

استعمال خفيف – Gently used—signals minimal wear.

يفتح النفس – Refreshing, appealing—used for clean homes, fresh food, etc.

بيعة زلم – Sold by a reputable seller; implies trust and reliability.

لا يفوتك – Another way to say: don’t miss the offer!

حالته فوق الممتاز – Better than excellent—used to highlight pristine condition.



–بيها البركة “It has blessing”—adds emotional, cultural value.

– ما تلگه مصروف – Daily cost is extremely low—used for vehicles/appliances.

–بيهة صرف – It spends well or runs reliably—usually said about cars.

–بس للطيبين – For kind-hearted people—used humorously or warmly.

–عرض خرافي – A dream offer—heavily discounted or extremely valuable.

–يرادله زود – Needs extra effort—implies the item is a project or has flaws.

–شغل عدل – Proper work—well-functioning, neat, reliable.

–بسعر التراب – “Dirt cheap”—an extremely low price.

–كسر خاطر -Priced out of sympathy—usually symbolic pricing

–ذهب – it runs like gold" – used especially for cars or devices to mean it works flawlessly, smoothly, and

reliably, despite age or price.

–يبجي من الرخص – So cheap it makes you cry—overstated, funny way to show value.

–ويا الملحقات – Comes with extras—accessories included.

Slang Expressions	Type of Slang
سعر نار	Fresh and Creative
كسر بالسعر	Blending
بالجفجير	Imitative
محروگ عليه	Flippant



تقليش	Fresh and Creative
بيعة حظ	Fresh and Creative
باب أول	Acronym-like emphasis
خوش سعر	Imitative
بالخمسين	Clipping
ماتلحك	Flippant
سعر خرافي	Fresh and Creative
ما تلگه مثله	Flippant
شغل نظيف	Fresh and Creative
للطاكين	Clipping
عالسوك	Blending
حجي زلم	Imitative
ما ينوصف	Flippant
بس للغوالي	Blending
سعر نهائي	Fresh and Creative
خوش فرصة	Imitative
ما يتفوت	Flippant
لا يفوتك	Flippant
مكسر السوك	Fresh and Creative
عامل بالمعقول	Blending
اخذ و ادعي لي	Flippant
جيبه عالسريع	Clipping
شغل ستاند باي	Blending
متروس مالات	Fresh and Creative
يرهم للخطر	Flippant
ما ينشبع منه	Flippant



مبين عليه مرتب	Imitative
يستاهل كل فلس	Flippant
استعمال خفيف	Fresh and Creative
يفتح النفس	Imitative
بيعة زلم	Fresh and Creative
حالته فوق الممتاز	Fresh and Creative
بيها البركة	Flippant
ما تلغه مصروف	Fresh and Creative
بيها صرف	Imitative
بس للطيبين	Flippant
سعر خرافي	Fresh and Creative
ماتلكه بالجملة	Fresh and Creative
يرادله زود	Fresh and Creative
شغل عدل	Imitative
بسعر التراب	Fresh and Creative
كسر خاطر	Flippant
ييجي من الرخص	Fresh and Creative
ويا الملحقات	Blending
ذهب	Flippant

3.4.2 Pragmatic Analysis

Depending on the context of the situation, slang expressions act differently as shown in table no.1 as follows:



Table No. 1 Pragmatic Functions of Slang Expressions

Slang Expressions	Type of Slang	Function of Slang	Classification
سعر نار	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
كسر بالسعر	Blending	To attract	Specific
بالجفجير	Imitative	To express impression	Specific
محروگ عليه	Flippant	To show intimacy	General
تفليش	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	Specific
بيعة حظ	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
باب أول	Acronym-like emphasis	To form intimate	Specific
خوش سعر	Imitative	To initiate relax	General
بالخمسین	Clipping	To address	Specific
ماتلحك	Flippant	To address	General
سعر خرافي	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
ما تلگه مثله	Flippant	To address	General
شغل نظيف	Fresh and Creative	To form intimate	Specific
للطاكين	Clipping	To address	Specific
عالسوك	Blending	To initiate relax	General
حچي زلم	Imitative	To address	General



ما يوصف	Flippant	To express impression	General
بس للغوالي	Blending	To show intimacy	Specific
سعر نهائي	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
خوش فرصة	Imitative	To initiate relax	General
ما يتفوت	Flippant	To address	General
لا يفوتك	Flippant	To address	General
مكسر السوك	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	Specific
عامل بالمعقول	Blending	To initiate relax	General
اخذ و ادعي لي	Flippant	To form intimate	General
جيبه عالسريع	Clipping	To reveal urgency	Specific
شغل ستاند باي	Blending	To address	Specific
متروس مالات	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	Specific
يرهم للخطر	Flippant	To show intimacy	Specific
ما يشبع منه	Flippant	To express an impression	General
مبين عليه مرتب	Imitative	To form intimate	Specific
يستاهل كل فلس	Flippant	To express an impression	General
استعمال خفيف	Fresh and Creative	To initiate relaxation	Specific
يفتح النفس	Imitative	To initiate relax	General
بيعة زلم	Fresh and Creative	To form an	General



		intimate	
حالته فوق الممتاز	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
بيها البركة	Flippant	To initiate relax	General
ما تلغه مصروف	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
بيها صرف	Imitative	To express impression	General
بس للطيبين	Flippant	To form intimate	Specific
سعر خرافي	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
ماتلكه بالجملة	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
يرادله زود	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
شغل عدل	Imitative	To express impression	Specific
بسعر التراب	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
كسر خاطر	Flippant	To attract	Specific
يبيجي من الرخص	Fresh and Creative	To express impression	General
ويا الملحقات	Blending	To show completeness	Specific
ذهب	Flippant	To express an impression	Specific



Discussion of Results

The data analysis presented the findings of the research, which aimed to identify and explain the semantic and pragmatic aspects of Iraqi slang used in local online ads. The analysis of the total 50 slang terms found in the ads revealed that the most significant themes that characterize the use of Iraqi slang in the selected local online ads show how advertisers convey specific intended messages. The findings contribute to an understanding of the significance of these themes in the socio-cultural context of Iraq.

To provide an overview of the findings, Iraqi slang is used creatively in local online ads to engage the audience effectively. Fresh and Creative slang expressions recorded the highest occurrence among the other types, then comes Flippant , blending , Imitative, clipping, and finally acronym-like emphasis.

The use of slang conveys semantic meaning beyond literal interpretation, showcasing creativity in language and communication style. For example, adjectives are used humorously to describe advertised products, while terms associated with financial matters imply an appeal to buy. Slang phrases referring to social behaviors are used to gain credibility. Moreover, pragmatic aspects acknowledge the effect of context on understanding and interpreting the use of slang. In some cases, understanding slang requires knowledge of social context. Overall, these findings enhance awareness of the significance of local slang usage in advertising discourse in local online settings, highlighting its role in reflecting language use and social changes. The specific/secret meaning of Iraqi slang words used in the ads facilitates the understanding of the ads and it is the means to achieve the local flavor of the ads.



The researchers agree with (Liu et al., 2019) in stating that the local slang often deviates from the standard Iraqi Arabic, voice-over messages, and written texts provided by the Ministry of Culture in Iraq. The slang used in these ads is described as "peculiar" and "unique" compared to other local online platforms.

By studying real-global examples and referencing academic studies, this observation underscores the effectiveness of slang in engaging nearby audiences. However, careful consideration of local versions and generational alternatives is vital to maximize impact. Iraqi slang in online commercials fosters relatability and cultural connection but requires nuanced utility to cope with nearby and generational variety.

Linguistic and social skills are implicated in coining slangs. Nevertheless, slang words can have cryptic meanings, the understanding of which relies upon a wide variety of social facts about how they are used. Such social facts can also generate cases in which a particular individual, notwithstanding his or her linguistic sincerity, fails to use a certain slang word or type in an adequately 'genuine' manner. Slang has some kind of special relation to social spaces, social activities, and social agents.

Understanding the local slang within the online advertisement context provides a window to a broader view of cultural practices, ideologies, and the formation of identity. Generally, the online ads analyzed in this paper employ Iraqi slangs that express solidarity and the in-group identity of the advertiser and the targeted potential clients. The syntactic structures of Iraqi slang used in online ads violate the traditional syntactic rules of the standardized written form of Arabic, in which either the simplicity of the structure or the informal choice of lexicons is employed. Advertisers who are cognizant of the target audience's familiarity with the local dialect take advantage of the pragmatics of Iraqi slang, so it is generally used to appeal to a broader audience who understands the dialect. However, some advertisers might isolate and exclude the audience who do not understand the local language to employ formality and ensure professionalism. Ads sometimes employ local dialects due to their



persuasive nature. Iraqi slang expressions are among those that reflect the social group identity of the advertisers in the commercial markets, even in online marketing. In this study, the results show that functions of slang differ pragmatically to fulfill different functions; to express impression occurred 18 times , to address occurred 8 times, to initiate relax occurred 7 times, to form intimate occurred 5 times, to show intimacy occurred 3 times, to attract occurred 2 times, To reveal urgency occurred only once.

Table (2) Occurrence of Iraqi Slangs Across Ads

Type of Slang	Number of Occurrence	Percentages
Fresh and Creative	20	40%
Blending	6	12%
Imitative	8	16%
Flippant	14	28%
Acronym-like emphasis	1	2%
Clipping	7	14%

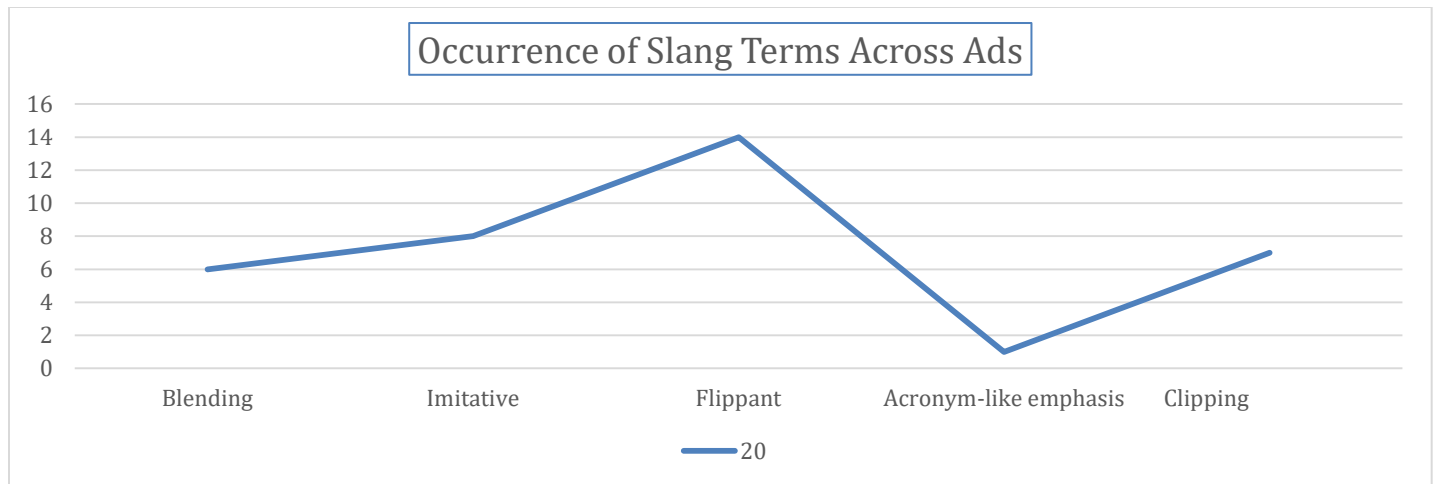


Diagram No. 1 of the Percentages of the Occurrence of Slang Expressions

Conclusions

It has been concluded that:

1. In relation to the linguistic features, slang terms are widely used to create relatability and humor.
2. According to the cultural context, slangs in the ads that incorporate humor, sarcasm, or cultural pride are widely used.
3. Higher engagement of the audience correlates with the use of youth-oriented slang and informal language.
4. Slang expressions enhance emotional connection and drive immediate actions including purchases or subscriptions.
5. The strategic incorporation of Iraqi slang in online classified ads enhances relatability, humor, and cultural resonance.
6. Most ads focus on urban slang, potentially excluding rural audiences.
7. Older generation slangs as well as modernized slangs are found.



8. Slang words can be uncomplicated and interesting but have difficult and epistemological features.
9. Fresh and creative Iraqi Slangs are widely used in local online advertisements, to perform the function of expressing interest.
10. Understanding the local slang within the online advertisement context provides a window to a broader view of cultural practices, ideologies, and the formation of identity.

Recommendations

Addressing gaps related to regional and generational diversity could further optimize ad effectiveness.

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