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**CHARASTERISTICS OF HEBREW ELECTRONIC DISCOURSE**

**CASE STUDY;**

**PRIVATE CONVERSATION AMONG ADOLESCENTS ON FACEBOOK**

**Long Abstract**

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# INTRODUCTION

Digital discourse is constantly developing through people’s writing in media such as Facebook. This research attempts to characterize this digital discourse through discourse analysis.

The research focuses on the grammar areas: morphology, semantics, syntax. It also focuses on discursive aspects such as: topic ,dialogue sequence and turn taking. The study also relates to the discourse of Facebook from the perspectives of psychology, sociology and culture.

As a high school deputy principal I spend my days with many adolescents and am familiar with their way of life as part of a group, and as a Hebrew language teacher, I observe how they express themselves in oral and written discourse in Hebrew. In this research, I am trying to understand the characteristics of their Hebrew discourse on Facebook so as to become better acquainted with their ways of communication and what they mean to them.

## Gap in Knowledge and Motivation for this Research

In recent years, several studies have been conducted with regard to the Internet in general and Facebook in particular, shedding light on different areas such as the psychology of Facebook, Facebook as a social network that enables creating groups of friends with shared interests, the language of the Internet, and more. Some of the studies have also referred to the linguistic aspect, but none have engaged in an examination and analysis of the discourse in private conversations in Hebrew among adolescents on Facebook.

The research enhances current existing knowledge by exploring discourse on digital media (Facebook) in the years 2013-2014, presenting a new lingual-social-psychological phenomenon. The insights drawn from this research have universal implications for any other digital discourse.

## Research Problem

Adolescents these days tend to use computer-mediated communication, through which they express their culture, wishes and needs. The language of discourse reflects their expressions. Therefore, this research seeks to examine not only what is happening in the life of adolescents but especially the characteristics of discourse in private Facebook conversations in Hebrew.

## Research Hypotheses

This study describes a communicative phenomenon among Israeli adolescents. The study examines the characteristics of Facebook discourse among adolescents, and the social and cultural meanings they attribute to this communication.

It can be assumed that:

1. The study will find that Facebook discourse constitutes fertile grounds for the adolescent to establish a common culture for him/herself and his or her friends. Through the Facebook platform, adolescents shape and strengthen their common culture through discourse and the topics about which they communicate.
2. The study will find that Facebook discourse among adolescents has characteristics, since the language is actually a reflection of their social and cultural lives, and the form of online media creates a discourse language that is different from spoken and written language.

## The General Objectives of This Study

The general objectives of this study are to characterize the relations between digital discourse in private Hebrew conversations on Facebook and adolescents' society, and to examine the significance of Facebook written discourse as seen by adolescents in Israel.

## Secondary Research Objective

To portray the characteristics of digital written discourse among adolescents in Israel based upon the following discourse analyses parameters:

1. Lexical: Using new slang words, obscene language, and borrowed words from other languages as part of the language;
2. Morphological: Characterizing morphological structures used in Facebook writing;
3. Syntactic structured: Characterizing syntactic structures used in Facebook writing;
4. Discursive structures: Characterizing discursive structures used in Facebook writing.
5. Iconic: Using icons as part of the discourse;

## Research Questions

1. What are the characteristics of digital discourse written by adolescents, as expressed in private Hebrew conversations on Facebook?
2. What socio-cultural meaning does Facebook have in the life experiences of adolescents in the current era?

## Research Background and Significance

All disciplinary domains in the humanities and social sciences are included in the field of interest of discourse analysis: the domains of language communication, language education, literature, psychology, rhetoric and style, sociology, the world of technology and computerized texts (Tinker, 2003).

Numerous studies have been conducted in the field of language and discourse, examining the changes in written language over the years, specifically in the field of digital writing context. Several studies (Lee, 2011; Crystal, 2006; Baron, 2009; Weissman, and Gonen, 2011, Cotoc, 2013 and others) have examined digital language in recent years among the younger generation (16 – 18), as well as of the role of written language in online discourse.

Facebook as a social network has developed in recent years as part of Internet discourse and allows for communication via language (through the platform) a type of 'oral text', suited to the users' mother tongues. This relatively young media allows for a new quality – the possibility of integrating speaking, data and written text in one message. Eventually, a language-culture of electronic communication was created, including norms, language and behavior (Dijk, 2012).

A number of studies have been conducted in Hebrew regarding Internet language (e.g. Weissmann & Gonen, 2011), but these studies do not focus on private conversations among adolescents using Facebook and its characteristics.

The findings of this study can contribute to knowledge focusing on characteristics of digital communication within social media such as Facebook in particular, and what influences and meaning digital discourse, especially in private conversations on Facebook, has on adolescents' lives in Israel.

This research characterizes Internet-based adolescents' communication through Facebook, and sheds light on a number of aspects in their lives, starting with their lingual expressions and continuing in their private discourse, the social and psychological dimensions expressed therein. The fact that Facebook communication is rather advanced in Internet discourse and together with the element of privacy in the conversations allow for describing and understanding adolescents' ways of communicating better.

This research helps the understanding of Facebook as one of the important aspects of Hebrew Internet writing and the characteristics of this discourse in particular and in general. Furthermore, this research may point at social and psychological trends while using this type of communication.

# Literature Review

Sociological research conducted in Israel indicated that the current generation of adolescents has lost some of its intellectual curiosity on the one hand, but has become more sociable on the other (Almog & Almog, 2016). This generation's ongoing childishness is expressed in a number of behaviors such as enjoying school and army humor, preserving childish patterns of discourse, difficulty in withstanding pressures and wish to live the moment without planning the future (Almog & Almog, 2016). This generation of adolescents was born into a computerized world and has developed with it. Computers have had influence on their way of thinking and lifestyle. This generation has been among the first to use instant messaging programs such as Messenger and ICQ, which allowed for virtual discourse in real time. These characteristics trained adolescents to accept naturally the social networks such as Facebook, to which many have become addicted (Almog & Almog, 2016). These social issues have come up in the analysis of conversations and interviews conducted for the purpose of this research, and hence their relevance to this research.

Furthermore, life in Israel provides an influx of interesting news, and Israelis need to be updated, exchange information and tell each other things, has turned the network into a huge and influential stage. Interpersonal and social discourse on social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp integrates news updates, politics and popular culture. Adolescents are eager to participate and share experiences and emotions and to advise others (Almog & Almog, 2016). The beauty in it is that this discourse creates as new level of collectivism. Adolescents do not need to be interested. Adolescents just have to create their own selves on the net (Weissman & Gonen, 2005). The fact that adolescents write posts, naturally brings characteristics of spoken texts into the written discourse on social networks. Additionally, the proximity of the written page to pages in other languages allow for contact and mutual influence between languages (Weissman & Gonen, 2005).

This social situation derives from the tendency to adopt a shallow, rather exaggerated dialect in spoken discourse and the written discourse in Hebrew in social networks, such as "*stunninnnng*!!!!", "*nooooooo*…" and addressing recipients such as "*My princess*", "*My life*" etc. (Almog & Almog, 2016). Criticism of this form of discourse is frequent, maintaining that it is poor, incorrect discourse, but there are those who claim that the rules of grammar are ceremonial and anachronistic, and it is possible for users to write any way they want, and there is no point in wasting time correcting mistakes. To shorten discourse, amalgamations such as "*גמני*" (instead of "*גם אני*" = "me too") were created, as well as dropping letters such as ""*משו* (*משהו*"" – something), use of emoticons to express feelings, doubling letters as suffixes (visual way of emphasizing messages), and signs that replace Hebrew letters (Weissman & Gonen, 2005). Perhaps this linguistic casualness also creates sloppy thinking and lack of respect towards a language.

In this light, a question is asked whether there is a link between the characteristics of Hebrew Discourse on Facebook and the adolescents' society, and additionally, what is the significance of these characteristics to adolescents as part of a social process? This research attempts to answer these questions and shed light on the phenomenon and its meaning to adolescents.

Various studies have engaged in other types of mediated communication such as e-mail, blogs and more, or have focused on the social-cultural aspects of discourse, have focused on content analysis of discourse in order to examine adolescents' level of exposure to violent contents and more, examined discourse in social networks in other countries, examined discourse in gender-cultural terms, or examined discourse psychologically by trying to define users' identities and more. Following are a few examples of such studies.

**Table 1: Meta- Analysis of Research Conducted on Digital Discourse**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Goal | Focus | Method | Main Findings |
| Reid, E. (1991). *Electropolis: Communication and Community on Internet Relay Chat*. Thesis, Dept. of History, University of Melbourne. | Examine use of the web in terms of individual and group identity | Use of web in terms  of individual and group identity |  | To understand identity, emphasis must be placed on the relationship between an individual and the society to which he or she belongs |
|  | **Goal** | **Focus** | **Method** | **Main Findings** |
| Williams, C.B & Yates, R. B., 1996 [*Analysis of a micro-electric generator for microsystems*.‏](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/092442479680118X) | Examine the social structure and components of the social situation in electronic messages (e-mail | The aspect of the social structure and components of the social situation that surrounds and defines communication both in spoken and computer mediated discourse | Analysis of e-mail messages | Computer mediated discourse is indeed influenced by a number of structural social factors and a number of social situation factors that surround and define the ongoing communication |
| Chandler, D. (1998). *Personal*  *home pages and the construction*  *of identities on the Web*.  Paper presented at Aberystwyth  Post-International Group Conference on Linking Theory and Practice: Issues in the Politics of Identity, 9-11 September 1998, University of Wales, Aberystwyth [on line]  <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/short/webident.html>. | To examine personal home pages | Linkage between home pages and personal identity | Analysis of a corpus of personal online pages, while focusing on social-psychological characteristics expressed in them, with emphasis on a user's personal and collective identity. | Home pages are objects that enable their authors to think about their identity. People tend to recycle others' pages and add their unique aspects. Personal pages convey a feeling that nothing is finite, but things are constructed and updated again and again. Whilst personal home pages are distinctive media forms in terms of content, as web pages they are also distinctive inform. Creating a personal home page can be seen as building a virtual identity insofar as it flags topics, stances and people regarded by the author as significant. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Goal | Focus | Method | Main Findings |
| Baron, N. S., Letters by phone or speech by other means: the linguistics of email. Pergamon: *Language and Communication* 18, 1998, p. 133-170. Department of Language and foreign studies, American University, Washington, DC 20016-8045, USA. | Examine use of language in private e-mail communication (computer mediated communication, not on Facebook, but e-mail) | Does e-mail language have written or spoken language qualities? Are there standards for the community of users or any expectations of traditional use of language? The research seeks to examine how e-mail technology influenced written language. | A dichotomy model while examining language uses in realistic contexts (speaking) in an ethnographic manner (writing). Also suggests observing e-mail from the perspective of traditional writing versus face-to-face speaking. The research suggests an integrative analysis that includes social dynamics, computerized formats, and lexical and semantic aspects as well as choices people make such as choice of words, grammar etc. | Differences between discourse involving a number of participants and that involving only two.  Language in e-mail discourse is not quite formal. E-mail can serve as a playfield, encourage personal closeness & be emotional. Choice of discourse may be a result of social, political or technological development etc.  E-mail profile is characterized by social dynamics -defines relationships among participants in a format defined by physical-technological parameters, grammar (lexical & syntactic aspects and style of contents (choice of words, for instance) |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Goal | Focus | Method | Main Findings |
| Erickson, T. & Kellogg W.A., 2000. [Social translucence: an approach to designing systems that support social processes‏](http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=345004) | Facebook discourse and its link to the issue of users' identity | Facebook discourse and its link to the issue of users' identity |  |  |
| Larsen, M.C. (2008). *Online Social Networking: From Local Experiences to Global Discourses*. Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University.Author links open the overlay panel. Numbers correspond to the affiliation list which can be exposed by using the show more link.  Opens overlay [C.B. Williams](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/092442479680118X), Opens overlay R.B. Yates [Sensors and Actuators A: Physical](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09244247)  [Volume 52, Issues 1–3](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09244247/52/1), March–April 1996, Pages 8-11 | Examine the aim of network communication framework in a Danish social network, and the extent to which adolescents' local discourse is concrete and connected to global discourse | Discourse analysis through categories of content expressed in conversations, and not necessarily through the type of continuum of discourse | Analysis of conversations on social media.  Analysis of questions and answers from the perspective of an adolescent's positive and negative experiences | Sometimes use is made of social networks to announce an adolescent's relationship outside the network. It was found that positive experiences and moment-by-moment activities came from everyday life.  In the discourse participants are used to saying words to express their feelings on a particular day.  Most adolescents use non-abusive, even responsible language, contrary to what adults think. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Goal | Focus | Method | Main Findings |
| Pearson, E. (2009). [*All the World Wide Web’s a stage: The performance of identity in online social networks‏*](http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/2162)*.* | Examine presentation of identity in online social networks | Ideas of performance can be used to conceptualize the play of identity formation on social networking sites (SNS). |  | Performance is a theatrical metaphor that can be used to articulate the shifting calculus of interpersonal relations that occur as we engage with others as well as exchange information.  The fluidity and self–conscious platforms of performance allow individuals and networks of users to play with aspects of their presentations of self, and the relationship of those online selves to others without inadvertently risking privacy. |
| Mesch G.S. (2009). The Internet and Youth Culture. *The Hedgehog Review*. Spring 2009 | Examine the social structure of technology of using the network in general | How adolescents express unexplored aspects of the self and to create a virtual persona. | Analysis of sociological aspects | Internet is used mostly for an important developmental task: relationship formation and maintenance with their existing friends. Adolescence is an important developmental stage; therefore, the most frequent youth use of the internet remains for social purposes. For example, Conversations that started at school continue after school through mediated connections of e-mails, and social networking sites. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Goal | Focus | Method | Main Findings |
| Cotoc, A. (2013). *Language and Identity in Cyberspace. A multidisciplinary Approach*. Babes-Bolgai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. | To emphasize the cultural diversity and the glocality (global and local aspects) of cyberspace and to scrutinize how different languages are represented online. | The way in which users express/construct their cyber-identities through the content expressed (narrative identity) and through their linguistic adolescent (discursive identity). | Observational method; experimental method (case studies): Netizens e-discourses; contrastive analysis. | * The online identity is a fluid representation. * Identity is mainly a linguistic phenomenon (narrative and discursive phenomenon) * The social affordances in Facebook are membership, expression and connection |
| Albert, C. S. & Salam, A.F. (2013). “*Critical Discourse Analysis: Toward Theories in Social Media*.” Proceeding of the Nineteenth Americas Conference on Information Systems, Chicago, Illinois, August 15-17. | **To examine social aspects in media discourse**  **to reveal the reciprocity effect between adolescent socialization and the language constructed around that socialization** | **Social media as a discursive system reflecting social practices such as online sexual predation, cyber bullying and social movements.** | **Discourse analysis** | **Discourse is a medium which shapes social processes.** |

Facebook discourse is also defined in technological means, which allow users to access private messages in a number of ways (Gunawardena et. al., 2009), meaning it is an electronic discursive genre, through which one can easily correspond with frineds personally, send them texts, files, pictures and emoticons. Facebook also allows for group discourse. However, this study engages in private conversations between two participants who are well familiar with each other and are close friends. Private conversations allow participants to get constant updates about what others experience in their daily lives, share joys and sadness with others – this discourse create a new kind of life partnership (Almog, 2011).

There are different approaches to discourse analysis: (1) analysis of spoken language / written discourse analysis; (2) the intentions of sender and receiver; (3) emphases on computer-mediated communication. These approaches were used in this study (especially the last one) in order to understand the adolescents' discourse as used on Facebook.

With regard to the different studies listed above, the method of analysis in my study comprises of not only analysis of spoken/written language in terms of sequences and discourse characteristics, but also emphasizes the relationship between discourse participants (the fact that there is a social relationship), and the fact that messages are transmitted via computer mediated communication, as Lenhart and Madden (2005) found (in a case study) that over half of Internet using teens are creating content in the form of blogs and through a variety of other online services like Facebook. As stated by Brown and Yule (1983) discourse analysis examines use of language in a personal and social context.

**Figure 1: The Conceptual framework of this research**

It can be stated that the private discourse of two Facebook friends in Israel (In Hebrew) has not yet been studied in terms of language characteristics – sequence, dialogue, and in terms of examining the discourse as part of a user's identity. My study seeks to shed light on the topic and characterize the relationship between digital discourse in private Facebook conversations and the adolescents' society, as well as to understand the significance of the discourse characteristics to them. The study adds and strengthens some aspects that have been researched such as the identity of adolescent users of the web and the influence of Facebook discourse on a user's social life.

## I.1 Issues Involved in Translation from Hebrew to English

The purpose of the translation is to stick to the original language but to try and match the translation to readers of the target language.

Translating discourse from one language into another is a complex job because each language has different terms, which require adaptation with reference to the level of language in the text. There are often certain phrases or words that do not exist in the target language and there is a need to look up suitable dictionary equivalents. A translator must look for a possible semantic-pragmatic parallel for translation of each word. A translator also has to try and show other indicators such as icons, gestures, emphases, expressions of emotion (empathic expressions) and the syntax and spontaneity expressed in the language of the original discourse.

Clearly translation does not always choose the most appropriate word because of the problem of polysemes, for example, or lexical meanings that differ from pragmatic ones, or specific grammatical features of the original language that do not exist in the target language (Pop, 2011).

The fact that discourse is embedded in geographical-cultural context poses difficulties to translators in the target language that often includes different and even conflicting social-cultural elements (Pop, 2011). For example, the word "חמשוש” in Hebrew, is used within the military cultural context for a weekend off from the army service, including Thursday – Friday – and Saturday. This word is restructured into the Israeli culture and cannot be translated verbally. Therefore, a good translator must consider the context when translating from one language into another. In other words, it has to be accurate and loyal to the original.

Translation that summarizes the content, or which adds or omits different signs or punctuation marks in the text is not suitable for this research, as it would not allow me as a researcher to focus on the authentic linguistic and non-linguistic means of the discourse under study.

Translation presents numerous challenges. Typically, a translator operates on the verbal record of an act of communication between source language speaker/writer and hearers/readers and seeks to relay perceived meaning values to a (group of) target language receiver(s) as a separate act of communication. (In some situations, for example liaison interpreting, the source language act of communication is intended directly and only for a target language receiver.) )Hatim & Mason, 1997).

However, there are specific problems with regard to translating Hebrew into English,

The multilingual nature of Israel stems from two main reasons: Israel's immigrant culture, and the existence of minority groups within Israel, the largest of which being Israeli Arabs (consisting of about 20% of the population within the Green Line). Compared to the dominance of the Hebrew language, Arabic is situated in the margins despite its status as one of the official languages ​​of Israel. Immigrant languages are ​​also largely relegated to the margins of culture because of the Zionist vision and subsequent melting-pot policy. This has changed in recent years, as a result of mass immigration from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s, as well as post-Zionist trends in the absorbing-society itself (Weisbrod, 2007).

The fact that Israel is a country with a culture composed of multiple secondary cultures needs to be taken into account when translating into English. In other words, translation is not just transfer from one language to another – often there is also translation from culture to culture. An accepted form of translation is adding a footnote to the translated text, in which the translator explains the cultural context of a particular concept, in order to provide the proper meaning of this concept. At other times, the translator forgoes accuracy in order to accommodate the translation to the target culture. In this research, this latter strategy seemed most appropriate and was used in the translation of Facebook conversations.

# Research Paradigm and Methodology

## II.1 Case Study

The research paradigm and approach is a Case study. Yin (1984) defines a case study in the following manner: "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident "(Yin, 1984, p. 23).

Case studies are a valuable way of looking at the world around us (Rowley, 2002).

Below is a brief discussion of the advantages of a case study and the reason why I chose it as the research method.

Case study research is also good for contemporary events when the relevant behavior cannot be manipulated (Rowley, 2002). Case study has advantages: it is applicable to real life human situations and it is publicly accessible for written reports (Sue Soy, 2006).

This research seeks to characterize private Facebook conversations between pairs of adolescents via content and discourse analysis. The analysis of the conversations also includes reference to the socio-cultural reality where the discourse takes place, and the adolescents' field of activity – Facebook. Case study allowed for the presentation of the social situations and the complexity of discourse in an optimal manner. Each conversation has been individually examined, and when after examination of the findings, conclusions emerged as generalizations. Case study allowed for answering the research questions and focusing on the characteristics of the discourse while analyzing the interviews as triangulation, complementing the analysis of conversations, and thus the phenomenon is depicted in a comprehensive manner (Yin, 1984).

## II.2 Research Stages

The research design included the following stages:

In the first stage, private conversations (between pairs of participants) were collected from the Facebook pages of the adolescents participating in the sample. These conversations were analyzed by content analysis and discourse analysis.

In the second stage semi-structured interviews were conducted at the homes of some adolescents who had conversations on Facebook. Talks were held in their rooms without external interference. At the end of the interviews and their analysis conclusions were drawn and insights reached.

The method I chose to conduct qualitative research is a two-staged qualitative method, since the starting point for this study is the person, which means we are required to understand human actions. In the case of this study, we seek to understand the characteristics the language of adolescents' discourse on the social network, i.e. Facebook. Through this research we will be able to better understand the human adolescent through language, views, attitudes to values and to events and demands.

## II.3 Research Population and Sampling

The research focuses on a group of adolescents from Israel. For this purpose, a sample of 10-15 Israeli adolescents: boys and girls, who live in different communities. Their ages range from 16-18. All of them come from average – high socioeconomic backgrounds. Some participants are high school students and others are soldiers. The choice of a population of adolescents was consciously made, which means this is a purposeful sample. Informants who successfully represent the population from which they were chosen have some characteristics that render them to be appropriate for the purposes of research. They are able to answer questions (in an interview, for example) and to express their experiences in their answers (Shkedi, 2003). Mason (1996) defined this model as a sample focusing on the choice of informants that best represent the population from which were selected, and who can teach us about the phenomenon under study (Mason, 1996).

Choice of participants in this research was not random. I chose the adolescents because I knew I could have access to their conversations, which I sought to characterize in this research, on Facebook. The adolescents gave their consent to participate in the research. They were selected so that they could serve as a "Case Steady", and truly reflect the communication of adolescents through their private conversations on Facebook. The sample is therefore representative of the population, purposeful and selective.

Below are the characteristics of the adolescents that were chosen as participants in the current research.

**Table 2: Adolescents in the sample: research population profile**

\* All participants live in Israel and have high school education

\*\* All participants' mother tongue is Hebrew

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Adolescents in the Sample: | Age | Gender | Place of Residence | Socio-economic status | Current occupation |
| Participant 1 | 17 | Female | Haifa | A | Student |
| Participant 2 | 17 | Female | Haifa | A | Student |
| Participant 3 | 17 | Male | Kiryat Motzkin | A | Student |
| Participant 4 | 16.5 | Female | Kiryat Motzkin | A | Student |
| Participant 5 | 18 | Female | Nesher | B | Soldier |
| Participant 6 | 18 | Male | Nesher | B | Soldier |
| Participant 7 | 17 | Male | Modiyin | A | Student |
| Participant 8 | 17 | Female | Modiyin | B | Student |
| Participant 9 | 18 | Male | Yokneam | B | Soldier |
| Participant 10 | 16 | Female | Rahanana | A | Student |
| Participant 11 | 18 | Male | Hadera | A | Soldier |
| Participant 12 | 17 | Male | Hadera | A | Student |
| Participant 13 | 16 | Male | Yokneam | B | Student |
| Participant 14 | 16 | Female | Modiyin | A | Student |
| Participant 15 | 18 | Female | Ramat Yishai | B | Soldier |

Table Explanations

* Socio-economic status

A = high

B = Average

## II.4 Corpus

John Sinclair's book, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation* (1991), showed how computer-assisted corpus analysis reveals the central place of phraseology in language use (Sinclair, 1991). He claimed that corpus can give us information like frequency of words in the text, the register of the language and how language is used to express ideas, for example: excess use of adjectives, adverbs, exclamations and more for the purpose of expressing an opinion, emotions or ideas.

As such, a corpus is a collection of texts that are stored electronically and can be used for the purpose of finding information about language and how it is used in discourse (Bennett, 2010). A corpus must also be focused on three factors: The corpus must be principled, it must use authentic text, and it must have the ability to be stored electronically.

When choosing a corpus, one needs to find out about copyright of the written texts that are part of the corpus.

It is customary to use concordance software for the analysis of corpora (such as "TextStat") for examining the meanings of words and the expressions that accompany the words. This research did not use this software.

The current research is not interested in statistical analysis of frequencies of use of specific words, but rather in the content of discourse and its meaning as expressed in the use of language, the dialogue sequence, non-verbal aspects such as icons and emoticons and register. Hence the framework set for the creation of corpus in this research is one set by designed activities:

1. Asking the research questions;
2. Setting the register on which the corpus focuses;
3. Choosing a corpus that suits the register (Bennet, 2010).

The current research uses Specialized Corpora. It contained texts of a certain type and aims to be representative of the language of this type. The corpus is constructed in a way that it has to answer specific questions.

In this study discourse analysis was conducted on a corpus of 50 adolescents' private conversations on Facebook. The corpus included private conversations between pairs of adolescents (aged 16-18), who are connected to each other as friends in different frameworks (school mates, friends from the army and so forth). Sampling the adolescents was purposeful, so as to reflect the needs of the research.

It needs to be noted that the corpus was translated from Hebrew to English. In the process of converting the conversations from Hebrew to English, care was taken to maintain the original meaning of the discourse as much as possible. This corpus was chosen as it best reflects the characteristics of adolescents' discourse on Facebook. An additional part of this corpus consists of 10 interviews with some of the adolescents who participated in the private conversations under study.

# III. Findings

An example of one private Facebook conversation and its analysis:

**Conversation No. 15**

Isshhhh

Okay I'm going to city hall there are all kinds of painting jobs and stuff

I'l go look if they have something to offer

6/5, 9:48 am

Saah

Wait are you leaving now?

Because I have a train at 11

6/5, 9:49 am

I don't know in like a half-hour Ispose

**Analysis of Conversation No. 15**

**Situation**

The conversation is between two boys at the age of 17. School friends. Both live in the city of Modi'in.

**Topic**

The conversation pertains the topic of looking for a summer job in city hall.

**Dialogue sequence:**

The sequence is informative. For example: "*OK I'm going to city hall there are all kinds of painting jobs and stuff I'l go look if they have something to offer*".

The beginning of the conversation is by address through greeting (slang), followed by a description of the speaker'' future action regarding a job search.

*"Isshhhh*

*Okay I'm going to city hall there are all kinds of painting jobs and stuff*

*I'l go look if they have something to offer*".

*"איייש*

*טוב אני הולך לעירייה יש שם כל מיני עבודות צביעה וזה*

*אני אלך להסתכל אם יש להם משהו להציע "*

The second participant answers with a question about his friend's scheduled departure, and informs him about the train departure times towards another destination where he is heading.

*"Saah*

*Wait are you leaving now?*

*Because I have a train at 11".*

It should be noted that the second participant's comments start with a random word with no meaning at all,

" סעאה" ="Saah"

This word acts as a conjunction for his words, a way of stalling in order to provide an answer.

The first participant answers the question, saying that he will probably leave the house in about half an hour.

There is a sort of sharing of future actions in order to get some reinforcement or agreement for action that he wants to take. Indeed, the friend's response is supportive, and he states that he will probably join the job search, even asking when he is going.

The first participant indicates when he will leave the house and apparently gives his friend the green light to join him. "*I don't know in like a half-hour Ispose*"

The taking of turn by the participants is done ​​without specifying a particular sign, despite the fact that the participant understands that his friend conveyed the message he wanted to convey. In one case, the transition was done ​​at the end of a question and the speaker's comment on it.

Main speech acts are informing and declaring (regarding the wish to look for a job in the municipality) and a request on the part of one participant to joint).

The length of the turn by the first participant in the conversation is almost the same length as the second participant; the narrative sequence quite short about 3 rows, and then 1 row. The rows are quite short. The length of the segment

During the dialogic sequence there are different forms of address that use either spoken language, slang, or a word without meaning that indicates a type of reference between speakers, such as:

*"סעאה", "איייש" = "Saah" "Isshhhh"*

The dialogic sequence also includes the following words to express the speaker's thinking time, such as: "k" but not in its dictionary definition, but as a conjunction for the following statement. Or the word  *"And stuff" = "וזה"* whose meaning also differs from its dictionary definition, as it means: and so on. "Okay I'm going to city hall there are all kinds of painting jobs and stuff".

The order of speakers is set. Each speaks in turn after his friend. The permission to start "Speaking" is when the participant is waiting for the end of the idea expressed in his friend's narrative, or when a question is asked.

Reference to the sequence of the text before the process: The participant wishes to seek employment in the city hall for the summer. In the process itself: The participant performs an action: going to city hall for the purpose of job application, and tells his friend about that. After the process: one participant will go to city hall in the hope of finding a summer job.

**Linguistic features**

**Lexical semantics** - There are some words that are coupled, namely two words united into one word when writing, as colloquial language. For example,

*"נראלי" = "spose"*

instead of: " suppose". This is done to shorten the duration of the conversation. In this conversation we find no words that describe the speakers' feelings. Most of the words are facts or narrative sequence.

There is use of content words that are mostly nouns. These describe the situation and focus the statements, such as:

*"עבודה, עירייה, רכבת" = "job, city hall, train."*

**Syntax -** Aside from one question mark at the end of a question:

*"רגע אתה יוצא עכשיו?" = "Wait are you leaving now?"*

Most sentences have neither conjunctions nor punctuation. Many times the sentence is non-standard, and many words are omitted from it. For example:

Most sentences are very short and concise. Many times the sentence is non-standard, and many words are omitted from it. For example:

*"כי יש לי רכבת ב11" = "Because I have a train at 11"*

instead of: the train will be leaving the station to my city hall at 11 o'clock. It is also important to note that the sentence starts with the word

*"כי" ="Because"*

which serves the purpose of justifying the next statement and is not meant to indicate causality. It is a discourse marker.

However, the narrative sequence of the conversation contains one long paragraph containing sentences without any punctuation at all.

Also the taking of turn by the participants is done ​​without specifying a particular sign, despite the fact that the participant understands that his friend conveyed the message he wanted to convey. In one case, the transition was done ​​at the end of a question and the speaker'' comment on it.

**Socio-linguistic features**

In terms of the boys' experience (past world), it is clear that they are close friends, because one is sharing the other with his plans. The second participant responds to and supports the decision, by stating that he is interested in joining the job search at the city hall, but might not be able to as he has to go to another destination.

In terms of **language-register**, and semantically, there is use of spoken language and slang:

*" לא יודע עוד איזה חצי שעה נראלי" =don't know in like a half-hour Ispose" "*

instead of: " do not know, I will start in half an hour".

The other Facebook conversations were also analyzed, and the findings are presented in the table below. The analysis of the conversation is done through 5 foci which guided the cognitive work on the data collected from 50 private conversations between teenagers on Facebook. The findings will be presented in a table showing these foci, which are:

(1) Culture and topics of conversation; (2) Turn-taking and dialogic sequence; (3) Lingual aspects: syntax, semantics, and morphology; (4) register; (5) Non-verbal elements

**Summary of findings emerging from the content analysis of the interviews with ten adolescents**

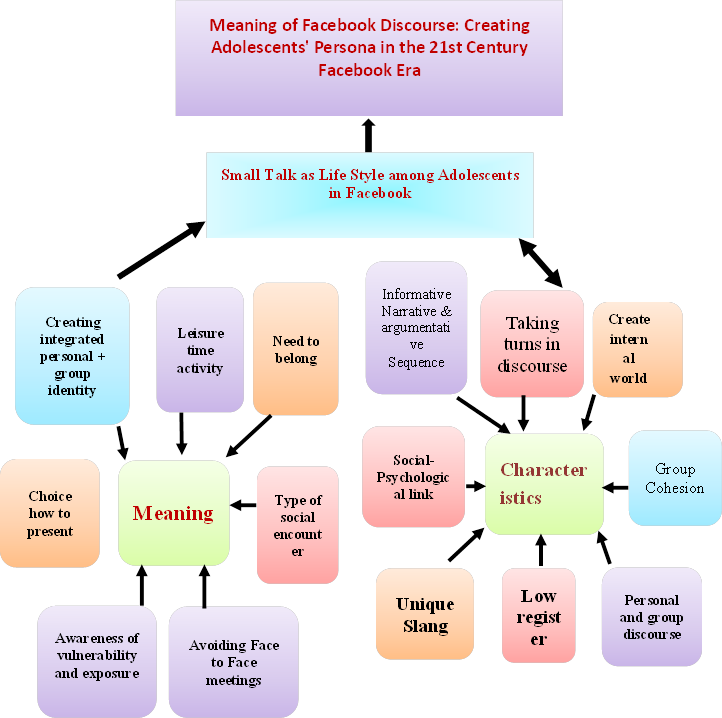
It emerges from the interviews that Facebook discourse becomes meaningful for adolescents both because of their characteristics such as using private slang, pet names, emoticons, expressing emotions in other ways and more, and because of its practical use that becomes part of their world.

Similar to spoken language that is also characterized by slang words, abbreviations and expression emotions, so too in Facebook dialogue. Nevertheless, in contrast to spoken language, dialogue on Facebook is characterized by elements not found in spoken language, that are meant to make it fit more with face to face talking, even though it is written, such as repeating a letter to indicate emotion or short sentences and abbreviate words or punctuation marks to show that it is the next persons turn and more.

The significance of conversing on Facebook is highly important to adolescents especially with regard to its common world of content and its importance in fashioning their socio-cultural position among their peers.

# IV. CONCLUSIONS

The ways stories are told by adolescents in private Hebrew conversations on Facebook shows a culture of conversation such as small talk that hint at the lifestyle of today's adolescents. Figure 3 below presents the model developed in the current research.

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## IV.1 Practical Implications

1. **Educational implications:**
   * The model that presents the significance of private conversations between adolescents on Facebook can help educators and parents better understand the world of adolescents, the issues that occupy them, the way in which they progress from adolescence to adulthood by analyzing Facebook discourse.
   * The abovementioned model shows that participation in private conversations on Facebook is not only simple communication, but that it has moral significance that molds adolescents' lifestyle in an online media world.
   * Words used are not accidental but have a deeper meaning regarding values to which adolescents are exposed en route to emotional and cognitive adulthood.
   * As such, educators and parents can prevent negative consequences of participation in Facebook discourse by guiding adolescents to intelligent use of this platform and preventing negative phenomena such as shaming and all types of sanctions.
2. **Communication Implications**:
   * The FST model constitutes a redefinition of linguistic means of communication characterizing adolescents' conversation in the 21st century. Linguists and language teachers can use this unique form of communication to redefine understanding of communication language and how it develops
   * In addition, the FST model can in fact present the culture of communication as it is expressed linguistically and its register as used in private conversations on Facebook. As such, Facebook serves adolescents as a platform to define their self-identity and emotional and cognitive development towards adulthood.
   * The culture of communication on Facebook also includes foreign concepts and words, mainly in English, and therefore from a global perspective, it can be said that there is an attempt here to see themselves as citizens of the world and as such, also improve their ability to communicate with adolescents abroad.

## IV.2 Contribution to Knowledge

Theoretically, this research, through the model based on its findings, presents an addition to knowledge in the field of digital communication on Facebook among adolescents.

The research also narrows the gap in knowledge in the area of characteristics of computer mediated communication on the Facebook platform in the private discourse between adolescents, and the significance of this communication medium in diverse areas in their lives such as: education, psychology, socio-cultural and used of language. This model, which emerged from the findings and conclusions, is both original and innovative.

Practically the FST (Facebook Small Talk) model contributes to knowledge in the field of education because it can guide educators, advisors and other therapists to an understanding of the culture of Facebook discourse among adolescents and its implications for adolescents in the 21st century. In addition, the model contributes to knowledge in the field of linguistics, in that it can help linguists understand communication using private conversations on Facebook, and recognize linguistic and paralinguistic characteristics.

The FST model represents, both from an educational and practical point of view, use of computer mediate communication on the platform of Facebook private conversations, and as such can lead to a change in how communication characteristics in the digital media age are perceived.

## IV.3 Significance of This Research

The significance of this study lies in the premise that Facebook is a social network which has developed in recent years as part of internet discourse. This research will help the understanding of Facebook as one of the important aspects of internet discourse and the characteristics of this discourse as part of digital discourse in particular and discourse in general. Furthermore, this research may point at social and psychological trends while using this type of communication.

This research will expand knowledge by shedding light on the digital writing field as used by adolescents on digital media, especially in private discourse on Facebook attempting to portray and characterize it.

## IV.4 Future Research

1. This research recommends examining the characteristics and significance of communication among adolescents on WhatsApp. Although this discourse does not use computers as a platform, but mobile telephones, discourse forms appear to be a direct continuation of Facebook discourse, in that many adolescents use it for private conversations rather than Facebook.
2. As a result of adolescents' tendencies to abandon Facebook in favor of cellular communications, it will be interesting to examine Facebook discourse among adults, who have also tended to adopt conversing via Facebook.
3. In addition, it is recommended that emotional-psychological aspects of Facebook discourse be studied with a view to the future. As state, future emotional-psychological implications, that users of Facebook, because of their past use (when adolescents) of this means of communication: private discourse on Facebook.

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