



Bar-Ilan University

Using a Combined Method of Rhetorical Strategies and Lexicometric Analysis: A Case Study of Prime Minister Netanyahu's Investigations

Maxim Lengo



Denial

- Evading responsibility
- Reducing offensiveness
- Corrective action
- Mortification



Bribe

- Fraud
- Breach of trust
- 12 criminal investigations
- Four different cases

In the current literature on image repair, William Benoit has cataloged five main strategies which individuals, organizations and groups should take in order to reduce the scope of the adverse reactions towards their image in times of crisis such as the one that Netanyahu has got into.

Over the past three years, the image of the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has been put to an extensive examination under the public's eye and as a result, gained lots of criticism, this has led Netanyahu's image to become more controversial than ever before.

Following recurring tensions with the Israeli media throughout his political career, Netanyahu reached to Facebook and published more than 360 posts about the crisis, to which the users commented more than 285,000 times. This data includes more than 8 million words and constitutes the corpus of my Ph.D. research.

The Lexicometric Analysis

The TXM software, which was developed in France and which I adapted to Hebrew, gives the ability to analyze a large corpus of texts, as in my research, by using tools and methods based on linguistics and discourse analysis. That is, decomposing the text into factors and elements, carrying out statistical analysis, identifying the hidden social patterns, and then restoring the corpus to its original mode.

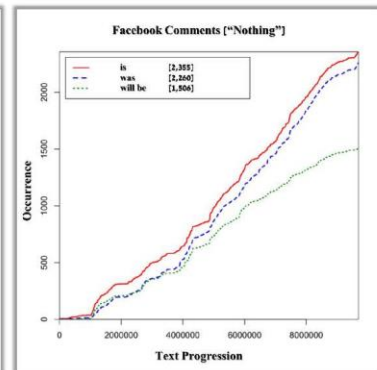
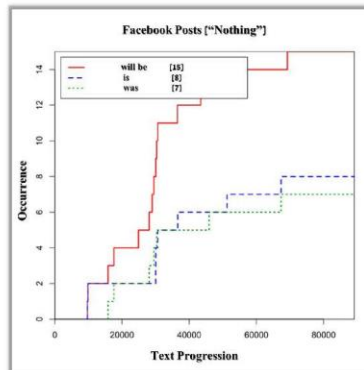
During the first stage of the study, TXM software allowed me to identify differences in the usage of the pronoun "nothing", between Netanyahu and Facebook users who responded to his posts.

Facebook Posts ["Nothing"]	
Co-occurrence	Score
Will be	35
Is	13
Was	10



"There will be nothing"
Netanyahu uses the pronoun "nothing" most commonly in the future tense

"There is nothing"
The users use the pronoun "nothing" most commonly in the present tense



The Rhetorical Strategies

As a leader required to deal with political debates, Netanyahu uses the deliberative rhetoric of Aristotle by focusing on the final (positive) result which could influence his political survival. He thus uses the future tense in an attempt to preserve or increase the user's support by denying the suspicions against him, claiming that his actions are always carried out for the benefit of the Israeli citizens and promising that the investigations will be concluded without any indictment or conviction. By contrast, the users use the epideictic mode of Aristotle by focusing on viewing any development in the investigations as a single ceremonial event. They criticize the investigating authority's work and raise arguments in line with the existing circumstances to support Netanyahu's innocence.

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