

## **Title: Peace Discourse in the Official Israeli Government Pages on Facebook:**

### **How are Israeli – Arab Normalization Relations Represented Online in 2020**

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#### **Abstract**

In 2020, the Palestinian cause faced a new challenge which was the Israeli-Arab normalization of relations and the signing of peace accords. Although historical peace agreements with Israel have existed, the turning point here was the extensive use of social media networks. One of Israel's political strategies to engage with the Arab people was the uses of Facebook pages that feature Arabic content and managed by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The posts on these pages use a discourse of peace, aiming to establish a connection between the Israeli government and the Arab public. The study focuses on three popular Facebook pages: "Israel Speaks Arabic," "Avichay Adree" (the spokesperson for the Israel Defense Forces), and "Ofir Gendelman" (the Spokesperson for the Israeli Prime Minister to the Arab media). Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Van Dijk, the study seeks to answer four questions: 1) Which topics are covered in the official Israeli Facebook pages that posts in the Arabic language in 2020? 2) What kind of language is employed to disseminate the Israeli ideology to Arab-speaking Facebook users? 3) What forms of populism are utilized on these Facebook pages? 4) How do these forms of populism contribute to the Israeli government's propaganda?

The results of the study showed that in 2020, peace discourse prevailed on the Israeli government's Facebook pages and through its official Arabic-speaking pages during the normalization of relations with Arab countries by using positive and favorable language.

The Israeli government presented the benefits and positives of signing peace agreements with Arab countries. These peace agreements are not only political and diplomatic, but also show common cultures, economic benefits, tourism opportunities, trade, sports, and religious events, with the aim of benefiting Israel economically and financially, portraying Israel as a promoter of peace in the region and drawing attention away from the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The peace discourse in these pages contained elements of soft propaganda, which included highlighting shared cultures, encouraging tourism, and economic benefits, and completely ignored the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There was a dissonance between the discourse and reality. Although Israel presented itself as a sponsor of peace in the region, these peace agreements coexisted with conflict and ongoing violations in the Palestinian territories.

Through its power, Israel uses social media and the Arabic language to control the thoughts and beliefs of the Arab public, and to shape perceptions of Israel in the Middle East.

Through peace discourse, the Israeli government pages aimed to manufacture consent among the Arab public by controlling narratives and shaping perceptions. By omitting crucial issues such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and presenting a clean vision of Israel, these pages seek to crowd support and legitimacy for Israel's policies in the region.

Keywords: Israeli-Arab normalization, Peace discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Facebook pages, Populism, Soft Propaganda.