**Linguistic expressions of moral deliberation: a comparative study of literary written language in David Grossman's works and Hebrew spoken language**

Since the 1990s, cognitive linguists have questioned the existence of a transcendent origin of human moral values, and have begun to study the natural origins of human value and moral deliberation (MD) based on the linguistic expressions used to structure our moral concepts (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Johnson, 1993, 2014). Nevertheless, the connection between these linguistic expressions and MD processes remains unclear. This study seeks to shed new light on these links by focusing on two key questions: (1) What are the linguistic features of MD expressions in everyday spoken language as compared with MD expressions in written literary language, and what do these features indicate? (2) Do MD processes have a developmental aspect, and if so, what are the different characteristics of the MD processes at various ages?

This interdisciplinary study aims to contribute to our understanding of the concept of MD and the processes involved in establishing it from a pragmatic-linguistic and qualitative-empirical point of view. For the first time, this study proposes to trace linguistic expressions throughout David Grossman’s collected literary works (for children, young adults, and adults) as a test case of written literary Hebrew, and to compare the expressions in everyday, colloquial Hebrew as used by various age groups. In our research of the written language, we will focus on the writings of David Grossman. Our choice of Grossman's works is based on the fact that they include a wide variety of ethical dilemmas in various contexts, such as the Holocaust, Jewish-Palestinian relations, parent-child relations, and relations between men and women. These dilemmas include numerous original poetic renderings of MD across a broad spectrum of genres. The spoken language corpus will be compiled from semi-structured in-depth interviews with Hebrew speakers on matters concerning MD in three age groups (5- to 7-year-olds, 9- to 11-year-olds, and 40- to 50-year-olds, with an equal gender breakdown).

Expressions of MD in both literary and spoken language will be analyzed by different linguistic devices, including direct and indirect forms of expressions, conceptual and mixed metaphors, and variations of dialogue (Lemberger 2015, 2019).

The objective of the study is to map out meanings, expressions, characteristics, and considerations that appear in MD-related processes, in three categories: individual, social, and universal. This mapping effort will be based on a theoretical spectrum of approaches to MD development, which will incorporate the ideas of the philosophers Charles Sanders Peirce, John Dewey, and Mark Johnson, as well as those found in the later works of Emmanuel Levinas.

**Scientific background**

Since the early twentieth century, linguists and philosophers have pointed to the importance of the study of language in understanding exactly “what kind of creatures we are,” the cognitive limits to our abilities of comprehension, and the origins of our moral values (De Saussure, 1913; Frege, 1918; Wittgenstein, 1922, 1953; Chomsky, 2015; Fouconnier and Turner, 2002; Grice, 1991; Jackendoff, 1994; Johnson, 1987, 1993, 2014, 2018, among others).

The branch of cognitive linguistics, an approach with its origins in conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), stressed the importance of the study of everyday language to expose human mechanisms of thought, understanding, and conceptualization, and contributed to the observation of the poetic aspects of everyday language (Gibbs, 1994). Since the trailblazing study by Lakoff and Johnson, metaphor has been considered in the research literature as the schema of cognitive thought that forms the basis of human thought and conceptualization processes (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Psycholinguistic studies have contributed to the undermining of the traditional distinction between literal (direct) utterance and figurative (indirect) utterance (Giora, 1997, 1999; Ariel, 2002), and demonstrated that poetic, figurative structures are also subject to cognitive limits, for example the directionality principle, according to which our method of conceptualization tends to shift from a more conceptually accessible domain, whether more concrete or more salient, to a less accessible one (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999).

Later developments of CMT into embodied metaphor theory (EMT) have stressed the centrality of experience and of the human body in our experience of the world and its conceptualization. This theory assumes that the basic elements that comprise our mental lives, including the concepts of our self-identity, are rooted in our tangible experience in the world; they are inextricably linked to the proprioceptive sensory system, which includes both our tactile and kinesthetic senses (Gibbs, 2005, p. 12). This understanding has led to the theory of image schemas, according to which there are cognitive paralinguistic patterns that map out the manner in which we perceive and attribute meaning to our experiences in the world, such as structures of containment, the use of force, path, motion, etc. (Johnson, 1987).

From the 1990s on, Johnson has studied the implications of the findings by cognitive scientists, and primarily by those in the field of cognitive linguistics, on the understanding of human moral views, and describes the naturalistic character of Moral Deliberation (henceforth: MD) while attempting to map the universal conceptual metaphors through which it is possible to identify expressions of MD (Johnson, 1993, 2014, 2018). Inspired by John Dewey, Johnson posited that “moral imagination is constitutive of moral reasoning” (Johnson, 2018, p. 169); he claimed that moral imagination is not a distinct faculty, but rather a process of experiential transformation and growth that takes place in a number of spheres, including esthetic judgment and moral judgment (Johnson, 2018, p. 170). However, Johnson conceded that Dewey used the deverbal noun “deliberation” only in the context of a moral problem-solving process (Dewey, 1922, pp. 132–133), while Johnson himself preferred to apply Dewey’s method to all the types of human experience in which man assigns meaning. Johnson’s approach, according to which MD is a process of transformation and growth, will be one of the interpretive options in the spectrum to be proposed in the current study.

Other linguists have tried to examine the field of morality in itself. Cross-cultural studies of morality metaphors have shown that the abstract target concept of morality is largely made up of concrete source domains such as economic transactions, force, straightness, light and darkness, and up-down orientation (Kövecses, 2010, pp. 23–24). Kövecses pointed to two foundational conceptual metaphors that construct the concept of morality—MORALITY IS STRENGTH and MORALITY IS NURTURANCE—and showed that people’s conceptual preferences also have practical implications. “In the MORALITY IS STRENGTH metaphor there is only a single moral agent, whereas in the nurturance version there are two agents — people who need help and people who have a responsibility to provide that help” (Kövecses, p. 69). Lakoff has also pointed to the implications of metaphors with regard to political inclinations (Lakoff, 1996).

At the same time, in recent years many linguists have pointed to the existence and prevalence of mixed metaphors in both spoken and written language (Gibbs, 2016). This fact might present a challenge to CMT, as mixed metaphors undermine CMT’s assumption that when we conceptualize a specific target domain in a language by means of a conceptual metaphor, it serves as a basis for the use of additional linguistic expressions (Kövecses, 2016). On the other hand, the high prevalence of mixed metaphors in discourse might be indicative of the cognitive flexibility and creativity displayed by individuals in understanding abstract concepts, and consequently, also in the context of deliberateness (Steen, 2016). Furthermore, psycholinguistic studies have taken issue with CMT’s principle of directionality, and have demonstrated that the link between source and target domains and concepts can be either unidirectional or bidirectional, at least on the paralinguistic level (Porat and Shen, 2017; Gil and Shen, 2021).

Nonetheless, there is broad agreement within the literature that research of the connections between linguistic phrases and cognitive processes, including MD processes, is still at an early stage. As these are causal but complex processes, and mainly abstract ones, it is extremely difficult to formulate a methodology that would enable accurate diagnosis and transcription (Johnson and Tucker, 2021). Therefore, even at the beginning of the twenty-first century, in which there is growing awareness of the simultaneous development of abstract thinking and conscious self-regulation in intelligent adolescents, much is still unknown that would enable us to generate a more deliberate capacity of knowing (Johnson and Tucker, 2021, p. 316).

In addition, it is especially difficult to research the concept of MD and the processes involved in its establishment, as the concept of morality, despite its practical implications, is an extremely abstract and complex idea. As described by Wittgenstein, moral decision-making is the result of individual will, and as such “it is clear that ethics cannot be expressed” (Wittgenstein 1922, TLP 6.421). Wittgenstein’s stance is also the accepted view today; see, for example, an identical description in the most recent interdisciplinary study to examine MD (*An Integrative Model of Moral Deliberation*, Tillman, 2016, p. 123). Therefore, investigation into MD has primarily focused on areas such as bioethics and clinical ethics (Tillman, 2016).

This study aims to contend with the lacuna in the study of MD and the ways in which it is established. In doing so, it will use an innovative interdisciplinary methodology that compares expressions of MD in written literary language and everyday spoken language through a developmental and intertextual lens. The literary language corpus of the proposed study will be composed of David Grossman’s collected works over multiple genres: children’s, young adult, and adult literature. The spoken language corpus will be compiled from semi-structured in-depth interviews with native Hebrew speakers in three distinct age groups that parallel the literary genres examined: kindergarteners (5 to 7 years old); schoolchildren (9 to 11 years old), and adults (40 to 50 years old). In order to detect the MD characteristics in the various corpuses and compare between them, we will use a methodology that combines tools and concepts from the study of pragmatic linguistics with tools and concepts from the fields of literature and philosophy that can be pragmatically applied. The methodological range will include four philosophers whose ideas will be explored below: Charles Sanders Peirce, John Dewey, Mark Johnson, and Emmanuel Levinas.

The methodology of the study was formulated based on the influence of two significant turns in Western thought: the linguistic turn (Rorty, 1965) and the pragmatic-cognitive turn (Engel et al., 2016). Both took place between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) is considered the first philosopher to examine the connections between language and thought (Frege, 1918), and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) the first philosopher to examine the relations between the thinking subject, the signs created in his thought, and the world (Peirce, 1958).

The focus on the study of the action of linguistic mechanisms in service of philosophy is attributed to the philosophers of the linguistic turn, chiefly Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein, 1922, 1953), considered the first philosopher to assert that everyday language, and particularly spoken language, contains the meaning that linguists seek to study and understand: “The meaning of a word is its use in the language. […] What is true or false is what human beings say; and it is in their language that human beings agree. […] Essence is expressed in grammar” (Wittgenstein, 1953, pp. 43, 241, 371; emphasis appears in the original).

In contrast to Frege, who concentrated on an epistemological examination of the connections between thought and the world, Wittgenstein proposed a methodology of ordinary language criticism designed to investigate the modi operandi and the rules of the language games we use in daily life, including in making up a story and in reading it, as well as in ostensibly simple actions such as requests and expressions of gratitude (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 23). It is important to point out that Wittgenstein rejected the existence of any hierarchy among the language games (and among words as a whole, whether abstract or concrete), and included poetic language in the variety of language games that he proposed to study comparatively (Wittgenstein, p. 130).

The philosophers of the pragmatic turn continued along the path put forward by Wittgenstein, but added a focus on the study of the connections between “our sensory, motor, and affective processes as we perceive and act in the world, and those same processes as they configure our higher cognitive operations involving abstraction and language” (Johnson and Tucker, 2021, et al.).

Peirce, the founding father of pragmatism and semiotics in the twentieth century, was the first to define the connections between thought, language, and the world, by making a distinction between various types of signs—index, icon, and symbol (Lemberger, 2020b). Peirce claimed that there is a direct link between signification processes and the process of self-constitution: “my language is the sum total of myself” (Peirce, 1958, § 5.314). He defined the process of self-constitution as a developmental mental process that begins with self-reflection and ends with moral deliberation (Peirce, 1958). Peirce referred to the cognitive proficiency that enables a process of self-reflection, examination, and moral decision-making as “agency; that is, the conscious experience of oneself as the initiator and executor of one’s own actions” (David et al., 2008).

The view that agency is expressed in moral responsibility and moral development appears as early as in Greek philosophy, in the writings of Epicurus, the renowned skeptic (Bobzien, 2006). Peirce's theory contributes to the understanding of MD from three key angles. Its first contribution is to define semiotics, and above all the actual use of words, as a criterion for any action of the consciousness, including MD and moral development (Peirce, 1958). Thus, Peirce emphasized the dialogic nature of thought both as an internal-reflective process and as a process of conceptualization, or any other reference to the external world (All thinking is dialogic in form [Peirce, 1958, § 6.338]).

Its second contribution is in the distinction that moral decision-making is necessarily a conscious process and is manifested in the establishment of a position or habit in relation to a specific reality (Peirce, 1958, § 5.440). There is no point in expecting man to behave morally unless he has a self-control mechanism that enables him to choose between good and bad. The implication is that moral decision-making is a rational, cognitive process, and is therefore conscious and controlled.

The third contribution of Peirce’s theory is the suggestion that it is possible to describe in detail the process by which self-control operates. In other words, the semiotic methodology of the study of conscious processes can also be applied with respect to self-control and moral decision-making (Peirce, 1958, § 5.440).

John Dewey (1859–1952) continued in the direction of Peirce's research; in contrast to Peirce, however, he placed experience as the starting point for all human actions, including reflective thinking and moral decision-making (Dewey, 1929, 1934). According to Dewey, “aesthetic experience provides the basis for human meaning, knowing, and value.” That is to say, as far as Dewey is concerned, philosophy should begin with experience in the fullest, richest, and most meaningful sense of the term. Therefore, the reading of literature is also included in the experiences from which processes of moral decision-making can emerge.

Similarly, Dewey wrote considerably about theory and practice in education, and in particular instruction towards moral decision-making (Dewey, 1910, 1922, 1939). During his lifetime and into the present day, Dewey was and is considered the philosopher to have made the most significant impact on American education, as well as on the studies of linguists such as Chomsky (2015), Johnson (1993, 2014), and others. This is due, inter alia, to his theory that simplifies complex processes into pragmatic instructions that serve as a model for practical conduct. Dewey proposed a brief and pragmatic articulation of five stages of reflective thinking that characterize any type of thought, including attempts to contend with moral problems: (1) a felt difficulty; (2) its location and definition; (3) suggestion of possible solution; (4) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (5) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection (Dewey, 1910, p. 72).

These stages provide a succinct summary of the methodological instructions by which it is possible to examine moral decision-making in various types of language. It is important to stress that according to Dewey, it is both possible and worthy to educate towards moral decision-making; despite the similarity between this and any other act of thinking, it is the ability to make moral choices that makes human beings unique and that can lead them to optimal self-fulfillment (Dewey, 1939).

This study will add the later works of Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) to the pragmatic turn. Levinas was the first modern philosopher to place practical ethics before philosophical activity, as he describes in *Ethics as First Philosophy* (Levinas, 1989). The turn embodied in the ethics put forward by Levinas is in the transition from abstract ethical requirements to a concrete everyday requirement to strive towards “the proximity and encounter in the face-to-face relation with the particular other” (Levinas, 1999). The focus of this ethic is the acknowledgment of the sheer otherness of the other, sensitivity to his suffering, and responsibility towards him (Levinas, 1969, 1985, 1986).

In his last book, *Otherwise Than Being* (Levinas, 1998), Levinas created a methodological shift that will prove highly significant for our research: from use of the metaphor of the face to use of the act of speech as a key to ethical meaning (Lemberger, 2019b). Levinas distinguished between the “saying” (*le dire*) and the “said” (*le dit*) (Levinas, 1998, pp. 77–78), and claimed that ethical meaning is formed and perceived during a simultaneous action of speech, in the present, between the speaker and the listener. Moreover, the face metaphor in Levinas’s thinking can also be interpreted as a metaphor aimed at ethical action (Lemberger, 2019b). This metaphor is especially effective in examining the development of MD among children in the two age groups interviewed in the study (Lemberger, 2020a).

Besides the contribution made by the pragmatism of Peirce and Dewey to the study of language by Chomsky, Lakoff and Johnson, and others, the pragmatic method has been applied to literary works in various contexts. For example, in the area of modern literature, important studies include Roger D. Sell’s *Literary Pragmatics* (1991) and *Literature as Communication* (2000)andJørgen Dines Johansen’s *Literary Discourse: A Semiotic-Pragmatic Approach to Literature* (2002).

While future studies will examine the works of additional authors and even works in different languages, David Grossman’s oeuvre was selected to serve as an initial test case of poetic language as compared to spoken language for the following reasons. Firstly, Grossman (b. 1954) is considered one of the preeminent authors in Israel in the twentieth century, and he has produced works in a wide variety of genres: poetry, drama, short stories, novellas, novels, and essays, as well as a substantial body of children’s literature. Secondly, MD and the components of the semantic field included therein comprise central themes throughout Grossman’s work. Thirdly, the fact that Grossman has written literature for children, young adults, and grown adults provides us with the comparative lens through which we may examine the development of MD in this study.

Literary scholarship has already noted the ethical aspect in Grossman's works; however, MD has not yet been examined as a developmental process through which poetic language enables us to identify the differences between the moral decision-making of a child, a youth, and an adult. Thus, for example, Grossman’s contribution to the expression of ethics on the literary-narrative level has been examined by Meretoja (2014), who studied the dialogues in the novels *To the End of the Land* and *Falling Out of Time*. Meretoja examined how Grossman created openness and sensitivity to others in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as did Mendelson-Maoz (2019). Moreover, in the context of attempts to process the Holocaust, Grossman's novel *See Under: Love* has received particular attention in the academic literature (Sokoloff et al., 1987); a special edition of the periodical *Prooftext* was even released to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the book’s publication (35:1 [2015]). Alphandary (2014) proposed a comparison between Levinas and Grossman on the topic of innocence using the novel *To the End of the Land*, but he did not refer to morality as a developmental process. Neither have other discussions of the figure of the child in his works referenced MD in any concentrated way (Adivi-Shoshan, 2014; Baram Eshel, 2020; Darr, 2007, 2010).

Moreover, none of these discussions address the manner in which Grossman's poetic language structures moral acts. One of the methodical innovations of this study will be to examine the spoken language of the characters in dialogue as compared to the language used by the narrator, which is usually structured as written literary language. An additional modality of dialogue is between the different genres in Grossman's works. In light of the fact that Grossman created his ethical contexts within the various genres, the theoretical background to this study must include a general description of genre characteristics (Frow, 2015), as well as methodology for comparison between genres in order to clarify the differences between MD as depicted by Grossman in the various genres. Using the methodology for comparison between genres, we will examine what characterizes poetic language in each of the genres and how it contributes to shaping the developmental process of MD as well as the intertextual relations between the genres. The methodology will be based on the research of Bakhtin (1993), who saw poetic language as an ethical domain in which the readers experience ethical reflection as they come to understand the actions of the characters. The idea of dialogue was central to Bakhtin, and he regarded it as a criterion for linguistic and literary quality (Lemberger, 2019a); our methodology includes Bakhtin’s concepts in the study of genres—such as, for example, “intertextuality” and “dialogic imagination” [Bakhtin 1981]—to clarify how dialogues function between characters and between genres (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984, 1986) in processes of MD. Bakhtin’s important distinction of speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986) reflects a linguistic-literary method that is especially relevant to this study. The studies of Erdinast-Vulcan (2008, 2013) form a research basis illustrating the use of Bakhtin’s ideas to detect ethical actions in literary works.

Expressions of MD in the literary works will be compared to expressions of MD in everyday spoken language, which will be given authentic, natural, and spontaneous expression in the various age groups. The in-depth interviews will give expression to the experiences of the speakers in the first person and will enable us to extract both shared and unique themes. The comparison that the study proposes between expressions of MD in literary poetic language and everyday spoken language will be conducted based on the linguist Roman Jakobson’s differentiation between the study of poetic language and the study of other types of discourse (Jakobson, 1960). Jakobson showed that language functions in a variety of ways and has different functions defined by one of the six factors required for linguistic communication (addresser, addressee, context, contact, code, message) (Jakobson, 1960). In literature, the dominant function is the poetic function aimed towards the linguistic utterance (the message). In everyday spoken discourse of the type examined by this study (as opposed to literary discourse), the dominant function is the emotive (expressive) function that is focused on the addresser and in the expression of his relation towards the content transmitted in the linguistic utterance. The current study proposes to compare between expressions of MD in spoken language compared with literary language, inspired by Jakobson’s double claim that on the one hand, linguistic research of the poetic function should go beyond the limits of literary discourse analysis, while on the other hand, the linguistic analysis of literary discourse should not be limited to study of the poetic function alone (Jakobson, 1960).

The systemic functional linguistics that developed in parallel beginning in the 1960s also underscored the importance of the study of everyday spoken language and its contribution to our understanding of the learning and structuring of meanings. Within this linguistic school of thought, both spoken and written language are perceived as different modalities of the language with their basis in the same linguistic system, but each of them exploits different properties of the system, and each one has other functions (Halliday, 1968; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). In this sense, anything that can be expressed in written language can also be expressed in spoken language and vice versa, but as Halliday emphasizes, there are significant differences between written and spoken language. Speech and writing are used in different contexts for different purposes, they dictate different frameworks to be tried and experienced by their users, and even create different realities (Halliday, 1987, p. 93). Written language creates a world of things and construes phenomena as products, while spoken language creates a world of experiences and construes phenomena as processes.

Moreover, spoken language is rich in phenomena that do not exist in written language, such as hesitation, corrections, repetitions, incomplete utterances, and so forth. These “failures” may be treated as keys to understanding the creative processes of spoken text (Yatziv, 2003, p. 153). In other words, by means of these phenomena, it is possible to observe the cognitive processes that accompany the creation of the text. These properties of the spoken language do not necessarily indicate that it lacks order and structure. The complexity of the spoken language is manifested in grammatical intricacy, as opposed to the written language, which is characterized by lexical density, defined by a high ratio of content words to function words.

In summary, written language is much more densely packed with ideas and tends to be more highly coded and removed, or less directly related to experience. It tends to be typified by a greater degree of generalization, abstraction, and metaphor. The differences between spoken and written language thus impact our perception of the world. “There is, surely, a relationship between the way our experience is encoded in language and the way we apply that experience (or our interpretation of it) to solving problems” (Halliday, 1987, p. 96).

For expressions of moral deliberation in both the literary discourse and the everyday (spoken) discourse, we will use Dascal and Weizman’s model of text-understanding (Dascal and Weizman, 1987; Weizman and Dascal, 1991) and their distinctions between *cues,* indicating that the utterance's literal meaning is not a suitable candidate for the speaker's meaning, and *clues,* which help reconstruct an alternative speaker's meaning. Both cues and clues are based on contextual information of two types: extra-linguistic and meta-linguistic.

Indirect discourse has been studied extensively for the past four decades in pragmatic research from various perspectives. In a recent book on indirectness, the emphasis is put on “the way in which indirectness serves the representation of diverse voices in the text” (Livnat, Hirsch, and Shukrun-Nagar, 2020, p. 4). The current study also proposes to analyze the use of indirect linguistic means for expressions of MD.

In summary, this study will compare the developmental processes of MD in everyday spoken language and written literary language in order to shed new light on the ways in which understanding and moral action take place. In light of the lacuna in the study of the concept of morality in general and MD in particular, we will outline a broad spectrum of pragmatic approaches that will enable us to detect and identify expressions of MD in language.

**Research objectives and expected significance**

The fundamental challenge posed by the investigation of MD is that it is an abstract, fuzzy, and intangible concept, involving processes that are hard to trace and explore. The present research proposes to undertake an initial investigation of MD from a pragmatic-cognitive perspective in order to shed new light on competing approaches to MD. In particular, it will address the following question: What can the linguistic properties of MD expressions in both written literary language and ordinary spoken language, in different genres and different developmental stages, tell us about human MD?

In more specific terms, the current study sets the following objectives:

1. We will examine whether it is possible to discuss an abstract target domain, such as MD, in a direct, literal manner; and, if so, when we will find direct, literal expressions of MD as opposed to indirect expressions of MD in spoken language and written language across the various genres and age groups.
2. We will look for evidence of common conceptual metaphors on which MD is based, both in written literary language and in spoken language, and among the various ages (and the different genres: children's, young adult, and adult literature).
3. If we encounter the use of conceptual metaphors to conceptualize MD, we will examine whether the use of these metaphors is identical in spoken language and written literary language, or if we identify variation; we will conduct the same investigation with regard to different developmental stages.
4. We will examine whether the MD expressions in literary language are more original and creative than those found in spoken language.
5. We will examine the source domains used by speakers in the different age groups and in written language in order to conceptualize MD.
6. We will examine mixed metaphors alongside conceptual metaphors.

**Detailed description of the proposed research**

**Working hypotheses**

1. It is possible to detect characteristics of MD using a pragmatic methodology that enables comparison between monologues and dialogues in written literary language and spoken language. The comparison between MD in fictional and everyday texts targeted towards persons of different ages (children, adolescents, and adults) will enable us to show how MD develops. The working hypothesis includes the claim that David Grossman’s work, probably the richest collection in modern Hebrew literature, is replete with both direct and indirect expressions of MD, and as such it should contribute to a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Expressions of MD will include, on the one hand, basic elements that are shared across age groups, and on the other hand, discrete elements according to different stages of life, cognitive development, and challenges faced.
2. The linguistic use of all the types of language involves a conscious or unconscious choice from the linguistic repertoire (Halliday, 1976; Halliday, 2013). These linguistic choices and the study of their impact on MD will be at the focus of the proposed study.
3. Conventional, figurative linguistic means are extremely common in everyday spoken language (Cameron, 2008; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 1994; Semino, 2008). These means are even more common when the discourse topics are abstract, cognitively complex, and emotionally charged (Kövecses, 2005; Kupferberg, 2016). Therefore, we should expect the corpus of data in the spoken language to include the use of figurative linguistic means, and at significant junctures, we should be able to identify “figurative clusters” (Kupferberg, 2016). The hypothesis is that the analysis of these means will shed light on links of meaning and the manner in which words connect with one another, sometimes in unexpected ways and from extremely “distant” areas from one another in the lexicon (Sovran, 2014, p. 16).
4. We can sort expressions of MD in spoken language and written literary language based on a broad spectrum of pragmatic approaches discussed above (in chronological order): A. Peirce’s approach, according to which MD is the climax of a rational process of self-constitution; B. Dewey’s approach, according to which MD is based on moral imagination, and this is a moral problem-solving process (and thus a pedagogical objective); C. Johnson's approach, according to which MD is a process of experiential transformation and growth similar to other meaning-making processes in science and art; D. Levinas's approach, according to which the metaphor of the face of the other is a central conceptual metaphor that directs MD; this metaphor materializes in a process of speech-act in which responsibility for and compassion towards the other are expressed.
5. There is a difference between the use of figurative linguistic means in spoken language and the use of these means in written literary language. In spoken language, we find use of conventional figurative language, while written literary language makes use of new, creative figurative language (Gibbs, 1994; Johnson, 2018).
6. With respect to the developmental aspect, the study’s working hypothesis is that the development of language continues throughout the years of one’s formal education (Berman, 2004); thus, we may expect to see differences between the kindergarten age group (5–7) and the preadolescent age group (9–11). A previous study of Hebrew-speaking children revealed preferences for different discourse patterns among the various age groups, such as, for example, a preference for action-dependent discourse or play discourse in the kindergarten age group as compared to a preference for social discourse in the preadolescent age group (Blum-Kulka and Hamo, 2010). Thus, we would expect to find differences in the linguistic expressions between these age groups. Moreover, the study is based on the hypothesis that children are capable of understanding and creating a plethora of metaphors as early as kindergarten, but they display gradual development in the use of metaphor, going from metaphors based on physical similarities to those based on functional similarities, and ultimately to those based on both (Geary, 2011). Furthermore, the study is based on the working hypothesis that speech about MD also requires a Theory of Mind (TOM), which is defined as the ability to understand the mental states of other people (feelings, desires, beliefs, and knowledge) and to explain and predict their behavior (Miller, 2006). Initial signs of TOM appear between the ages of 3 and 5 (Wellman and Liu, 2004). During these years, children also begin to use indirect forms of expression, which represent a growing awareness of social norms and communication context (Owens, 2008). An additional hypothesis is that although TOM capabilities develop at an early age, they tend to exist along a continuum even among adults, ranging from complete and accurate to minimal (Owens, 2008: p. 244).

**Research design and methods**

The main focus of the proposed research is a multi-systemic investigation of written literary language and ordinary spoken language in order to identify expressions of MD. A special place will be devoted in the research to the mapping of the expressions on the suggested range (from naturalistic to an ontological point of view).

The examination of the literary language looks at intra-textual and intertextual relations between Grossman's work in various genres, as well as in different ethical contexts. It will be analyzed by means of a system of basic concepts and assumptions proposed by Peirce, Dewey, Jakobson, Bakhtin, Levinas, and Gibbs.

**The examination of the spoken language**

The spoken Hebrew data will be compiled in an intentional fashion based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with native Hebrew speakers in three different age groups (5–7; 9–11; 40–50), with an equal gender breakdown and with ten participants in each group. Some of the questions that will comprise the interviews will be common to all age groups, and some will be phrased differently for each age group. The aim of the questions will be to reveal various aspects of MD, and they will include various questions with wording based on themes from the theoretical spectrum and from Grossman’s works, such as: Tell me about an important figure in your life, what would you be prepared to do for him/her, etc.

Analysis of the interviews will be conducted in two stages. During the first stage, the interviews will undergo thematic and inductive coding according to the approach of Glaser, Strauss, et al. (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) for grounded theory development. In the second stage, we will focus on the linguistic form in which the speakers convey their messages, based on the assumption that focusing on form and not only on content will reveal profound, concealed, and less conscious and controlled aspects of the speakers’ identities (Lieblich et al., 1998). For analysis of the linguistic structure, we will use various linguistic tools, including analysis of figurative means, as well as analysis of repetition, syntactic structures, and discourse markers.

**Initial chapter list for the study**

Introduction: Theoretical background for differentiation between the study of written (literary) language and spoken language, from the linguistic turn to twenty-first-century research

Chapter One: A variety of pragmatic approaches to moral development – Peirce, Dewey, Mark Johnson, and the later works of Levinas

Chapter Two: Moral deliberation in David Grossman's works

1. The roles and functions of the dialogues between the characters
2. Direct and indirect expressions of moral calculation in children’s literature as compared to adult literature
3. The characteristics of moral deliberation in the various genres of Grossman’s works

Chapter Three: Moral deliberation in spoken language – analysis and mapping of interviews

1. 5- to 7-year-old age group
2. 9- to 11-year-old age group
3. 40- to 45-year-old age group

**Preliminary results**

An article containing a review of ethical development in David Grossman’s children’s literature:

Lemberger, Dorit. 2020a. “‘I am in some way my child’: A study, inspired by Levinas, of the stages in the development of an ethical stance in David Grossman's works for young readers,” *Criticism and Interpretation* 46, pp. 275-300 (Hebrew).

This article focused on a portion of Grossman’s children’s literature and examined two stages of ethical development. In the present study, this examination will be expanded to all of Grossman’s his works, and ethical development will be examined in various contexts, not only in early childhood.

**The researcher’s resources for conducting the research**

There is no problem of material accessibility and availability.

Prior to conducting the interviews, an application must be submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Interdisciplinary Studies Unit; this application will include informed consent forms for the parents of children under the age of 18 and for the interviewees themselves above the age of 18.

The researcher and the assistant researcher have full command of the Hebrew language, in which the study will be carried out, and which is the source language of the literary and spoken corpus of the study.