April 4, 2021

Prof. Yariv Tsfati

Department of Communication

University of Haifa

Dear Prof. Tsfati and Search Committee Members:

I am delighted to submit my candidacy for the position of Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication of the University of Haifa. I am currently a MINDSS postdoctoral fellow at the department, working with Dr. Roei Davidson and Dr. Eran Tamir (of Tel Aviv University) on a study of educational interventions by the high-tech sector. Within this project, I am in charge of examining public discourse by high-tech companies about their educational activities. The goal of this analysis is to uncover the underlying norms and values this discourse draws from and highlight the boundary work conducted through this discursive activity.

My PhD research, approved in December of 2020, was conducted under the supervision of Prof. Limor Shifman and Prof. Zohar Kampf at the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This research explores how ironic humor operates on social media, with a special focus on how it functions to effect social boundary work. I examine the design of irony on social media, how it is marked, and what discursive sanctioning can follow misinterpretations of irony, all in the context of collective identity construction. Two chapters from my dissertation were published in *Information, Communication & Society* (co-authored with Zohar Kampf and Limor Shifman) and in *New Media & Society*. These publications earned Top Paper and Top Student Paper awards from the Israel Communication Association, as well as a Top Student Paper award from the International Communication Association’s Popular Communication Division.

My research project “Performative Membership Categorization Through Limited Access to Contextual Knowledge” was recently awarded a highly competitive Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Social Sciences. This project will expand my engagement with the role of polysemy and misinterpretation in social boundary work. I will also re-engage with the issue of minority group communication, a central issue in my early work. This research aims to develop both a theorization of the constructive role of discursive misinterpretation and a methodological approach to the analysis of the “un-said” within communication research.

Teaching constitutes a central part of my scholarship. I have been deeply invested in the teaching positions I held throughout the last decade, as I place great importance on making higher education more accessible to a variety of groups and on nurturing students’ critical thinking skills. I served as a teaching assistant for a variety of courses at the Department of Communication of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the School of Communication of Netanya Academic College. I consistently received very high teaching evaluation scores and positive feedback from my students. Students specifically praised the inclusive environment I created in my classes, my high accessibility, and the relevance of class discussions to students’ lived experiences and critical media consumption.

Lastly, I am deeply committed to and involved in my academic community. My academic service activities include reviewing for leading journals, taking active part in conference organizing committees, and initiating peer group activities such as interdisciplinary study groups and a departmental peer-review platform for research students to debate and support each other’s work. While these initiatives were rewarding on an immediate professional level, I am particularly proud of how they contributed to the general collegial environment in the department.

Thank you for considering my application for this position. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Noam Gal

NOAM GAL

CURRICULUM VITAE .

**CONTACT INFO**

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**ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

2020-2021 Haifa University

 The Department of Communication

 MINDSS postdoctoral fellow

 Hosts: Dr. Roei Davidson & Dr. Eran Tamir

**EDUCATION**

2020 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

 PhD in Communication and Journalism

 *Ironic humor and collective identity in digital participatory spheres*

Supervisors: Prof. Limor Shifman & Prof. Zohar Kampf

2013 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

 MA in Communication and Journalism - magna cum laude

 *Internet memes and the construction of collective identity: The case of ‘It Gets Better’*

2010 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

 BA (hons) in Hebrew Literature and Communication and Journalism

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Gal, N.**, Kampf, Z., & Shifman, L. (Forthcoming) [SRSLY?? A typology of online ironic markers](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369118X.2020.1814380). *Information, Communication & Society*.

[IF 2019 = 4.559; R 2019 = Communication: 7/92 (Q1); Citations: 1]

**Gal, N.** (2019). [Ironic humor on social media as participatory boundary work](https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818805719). *New Media & Society, 21*(3), 729-749.

[IF 2019 = 4.577; R 2019 = Communication: 6/92 (Q1); Citations: 22]

John, N. A. & **Gal, N.** (2018). [‘He’s got his own sea’: Political Facebook unfriending in the personal public sphere](http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/8673/2410). *International Journal of Communication, 12*, 2971-2988.

[IF 2019 = 1.069; R 2018 = Communication: 61/88 (Q1); Citations: 18]

**Gal, N.** (2018). [Internet memes](http://sk.sagepub.com/reference/the-sage-encyclopedia-of-the-internet-3v/i5817.xml). In: B. Warf (Ed.), *SAGE Encyclopedia of the Internet*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. pp. 528-530.

[Invited contribution; Citations: 3]

**Gal, N.**, Shifman, L. & Kampf, Z. (2016). ['It Gets Better': Internet memes and the construction of collective identity](http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1461444814568784). *New Media & Society, 18*(8), 1698-1714.

[IF 2016 = 4.180; R 2019 = Communication: 1/79 (Q1); Citations: 234]

**Gal, N.** (2011). [The use of interpersonal and internal discussion tools in narratives of lesbian sexual identity formation](http://havana.mb-tc.info/academic-contest/2011/Noam-Gal-Mifgash.pdf). *Mifgash*, 33, 167-192. (Hebrew)

**UNDER REVIEW**

**Gal, N.** “You are the irony, not your tweet”: Sanctioning of ironic failures on social media.

**Gal, N.** Identity in Crisis: The dialectics of conflict and identity work in social-change activity.

**DISTINCTIONS & AWARDS**

2021 Finalist for top student paper award

 Popular Communication division, The International Communication Association (ICA)

2019 Top student paper award

 Israel Communication Association Conference

2019 Top paper award

 Israel Communication Association Conference

2017 Top student paper award

 Popular Communication division, The International Communication Association (ICA)

2015 Top student paper award

 LGBTQ division, The International Communication Association (ICA)

2015 Teaching distinction

2013 The Faculty of Social Sciences, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2014 Top three paper award

 (with Limor Shifman & Zohar Kampf)

 Popular Communication division, The International Communication Association (ICA)

**GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS**

2021-2022 Social Sciences Post-Doctoral Fellowship

 Israel Science Foundation

2020-2021 MINDSS Post-Doctoral Fellowship

 The Department of Communication, The Faculty of Social Sciences, Haifa University

2016-2018, Research grant

2019-2020 The Smart Family Institute for Communications, The Department of Communication and Journalism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2018-2019 The Brenda Danet Scholarship

 The Smart Family Institute for Communications, The Department of Communication and Journalism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2017 Travel grant

 The Department of Communication and Journalism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2017 Travel grant

 Popular Communication Division, International Communication Association (ICA)

2016-2020 The President’s Scholarship for Outstanding PhD Students

 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2016 Language editing grant

The Faculty of Social Sciences, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2016 Travel grant

 The Authority for Research Students, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2014, 2016 Scholarship for outstanding doctoral students

 The Department of Communication and Journalism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2015-2017 The Hoffman Leadership and Responsibility Fellowship

 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2014, 2015 Travel grant

 The Department of Communication and Journalism and The Faculty of Social Sciences, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2012, 2015 Travel grant

 The Lafer Centre for Women and Gender Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2012 The Lafer Centre for Women and Gender Studies Fellowship

 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

“The irony is you, not your tweet”: Sanctioning of ironic failures on social media. Paper scheduled to be presented at the *International Communication Association Conference*. Virtual conference, May 2021.

Are you serious?? A medium adapted typology of ironic markers online. Paper presented at the *Israeli Communication Association Conference*. Hadassah Academic College, Israel, April2019. [Top Paper; Top Student Paper]

Ironic humor in the context-collapsed web as a social segregation tool. Paper presented at the *International Pragmatics Research Association Conference*. Belfast, July 2017.

‘I make the decisions here’: Political Facebook unfriending in the personal public sphere (with Nicholas John). Paper presented at the *International Communication Association Conference*. San Diego, May 2017.

The intellect-physicality divide: Ironic humor as a social segregation tool. Paper presented at the *International Communication Association Conference*. San Diego, May 2017.[Top Student Paper]

Facebook unfriending and the personal public sphere (with Nicholas John). Paper presented at the *Israeli Communication Association Conference*. Sapir Academic College, Israel, April2017.

 “One people”? Ironic humor and collective identity in Israeli social network sites. Paper presented at the *Israeli Communication Association Conference*. Sapir Academic College, Israel, April2017.

’I can’t see you any more’: A phenomenology of political Facebook unfriending (with Nicholas John). Paper presented at the *Association of Internet Research*. Berlin, October 2016.

'THIS IS NOT REAL, NO WAY!': The (failed?) ironic utterance as a social segregation tool. Paper presented at the *International Communication Association Conference*. Japan, June2016.

Identity in crisis: The dialectics of social identity and conflict in LGBT social-change activity. Paper presented at the *International Communication Association Conference*. Puerto Rico, May2015. [Top Student Paper]

The positioning of LGBT/queer research in Israeli sociology. Round-table held at the *Israeli Sociology Society Conference*. Kinneret Academic College, Israel, February 2015.

'It Gets Better': Internet memes and the construction of collective identity *(*with Limor Shifman and Zohar Kampf). Paper presented at the *International Communication Association Conference*. Seattle, May2014. [Top Three Paper]

Memetic practices in the participatory cyber space and collective identity construction: The case of 'It Gets Better'. Paper presented at the *Israeli Communication Association Conference*. Netanya Academic College, Israel, April2014.

Internet memes and the construction of collective identity: The case of 'It Gets Better'. Paper presented at *Metaksherim: Conference for communication graduate students.* Haifa University, Israel, December 2012.

(Un)queering the alternative public sphere. Paper presented at *Queering Paradigms*, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 2012.

Subversion vs. compliance in LGBT social change activity. Paper presented at *Queering Paradigms*, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 2012.

'How could I have not known about myself... Nobody told me!': Interpersonal and internal discussion in processes of lesbian identity formation. Paper presented at *Between Sexual Orientation and Professional Bias,* The Bob Shapell School of Social Work, Tel-Aviv University, Israel, October 2011.

'Let's not call it perverse': Power relations and negotiation over social order in LGBT social change activity. Paper presented at *Mind the Gap,* Lafer Center for Women and Gender studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, May 2011.

**INVITED TALKS**

Crime & Punishment: Interpretive failures of irony on social media and the sanctions they endure. The departmental seminar of the Department of Communication, Haifa University, November 2020.

Ironic humor on social network sites: The case of ‘The Lions of the Shadow’. The departmental seminar of the *School of Communication at the College of Management*. Israel, December 2016.

‘Devoid of humor but dedicated to mockery’: Gender, ethnicity, and the intellect-physicality divide in Israeli political irony. The jubilee conference of the Department of Communication and Journalism, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Israel, May 2016.

The use of an interpersonal and internal discussion tool on narratives of lesbian sexual identity formation. *'Mifgash' conference for the launch of issue 33,* Netanya Academic College, Israel, December 2011.

**TEACHING & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**Teaching assistant**

Frontal teaching (classes of 10-60 students), personal academic guidance, essay and exam grading

2011-2018 Department of Communication and Journalism, The Hebrew University

 Courses: Language and communication (BA); Reading and writing supervision (BA, independent course); Research methods in communication (BA); Televised humor in Israel (BA – not frontal); Gender and communication (BA & MA); New media and the information age (MA); Advanced methods in cultural, textual and visual research (MA)

2014 School of Communication, Netanya Academic College

 Courses: Digital culture (BA); Qualitative research methods (BA)

**Research assistant**

Material collection, coding procedure, in-depth interviews

2011-2016 Department of Communication and Journalism, The Hebrew University

**ACADEMIC ACTIVITY & SERVICE**

**Journal review**

* *New Media* & *Society*
* *Journal of Pragmatics*
* *Journal of Homosexuality*
* *Women & Language*
* *Feminist Media Studies*
* *European Journal of Humour Research*
* *Constructive Pragmatics*

**Conference review**

* *International Communication Association (ICA)*, divisions of popular communication, LGBT studies, feminist scholarship, and annual theme (“intervention”).
* *Metaksherim: The annual conference for communication graduate students,* Haifa University.
* *Mind the Gap: Academy and activism within the queer community*. Lafer Center for Women and Gender studies, The Hebrew University, Israel.

**Conference organizing committee**

2015-2016 *Metaksherim: The annual conference for communication graduate students.* Haifa University, Israel.

2012 *Mind the Gap: Academy and activism within the queer community*. Lafer Center for Women and Gender studies, The Hebrew University, Israel.

2008-2010 *Between Sexual Orientation and Professional Bias*. The Bob Shapell School of Social Work, Tel-Aviv University, Israel. [Founding organizing committee]

**Other**

2013 Workshop instructor, *Academic empowerment workshop for underprivileged graduate-school candidates.* Dean of Students’ Office, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.

2011-2013 Founding member, *Scholar peer group for research students of queer studies*. Lafer Center for Women and Gender studies, The Hebrew University, Israel.

2006-2010 Member of founding editorial team, *Beintaim; Journal of literature*. School of Literatures, The Hebrew University, Israel.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

*The Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance*

Youth counselor, clinic manager, board member and chairperson

*Hoshen: Education and social change*

Lecturer, volunteers' trainer, volunteer manager, research coordinator

*B’Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories*

Member of checkpoint documentation team

Updated April 2021

NOAM GAL

SCIENTIFIC BIOGRAPHY .

My research explores the relationship between discourse and identity. I am especially interested in the ways personal, collective, and public identities shape discourse, and how discourse shapes these identities. Spanning coming-out narratives, social change activism, social media irony and educational interventions, my work examines the dialectics between discourse and identity.

My early work focused on gender and queer studies. In a paper based on one of my BA seminars (Gal, 2011), I analyze in-depth interviews I conducted with thirteen lesbian women to explore the role of discourse—and the perceived implications of its absence—in processes of personal identity construction. This paper describes the recurrent discussion between two inner voices: that of the young, frightened, closeted woman, and that of the experienced, accepting, “out” woman, which together conduct an intra-personal mentoring process that serves as an alternative to unattainable interpersonal discourse. In another study (under review), I analyze ten observations of social change activities practiced by an LGBT education organization to examine how identity categories function as both a source of legitimation and a product of these activities. My analysis shows how individuals attempt to gain acceptance into mainstream society by repeatedly downplaying marginalized aspects of gender and sexual identities while foregrounding more hegemonic ones.

My MA thesis research explored the use of Internet memes in the construction of collective identity and the design of social boundaries. I conducted a mixed methods analysis of 200 YouTube videos of an LGBT campaign, coding and applying qualitative critical discourse analysis to selected texts. This research illustrates how practices of imitation and variation of memetic patterns act as performative tools in the collective design of a social order. The article that I co-authored with my supervisors based on this research was awarded Top Paper by the International Communication Association’s Popular Communication Division and was cited over 230 times (Gal, Shifman & Kampf, 2016).

My doctoral research further explored the dialectics between online discourse and identity, this time with a focus on ironic humor and collective identity on social media. The first chapter, published as a sole-authored article (Gal, 2019), explores the intersection between content, keying, and medium through the case study of left-wing Facebook humor targeting a right-wing group. This research elucidates the use of existing identity categories (gender and ethnicity) as the basis of online ironic humor, and the use of ironic humor as a tool in the consolidation of a new social divide I define as the *intellect-physicality divide*. The paper in question also introduces the concepts of *divisive versus cohesive polysemy* as central discursive devices in processes of social collectivization and segregation online. The second chapter, published as a co-authored article with my supervisors, examines ironic humor on five social media platforms and offers a typology of five ironic markers characteristic of social media irony (Gal, Kampf & Shifman, 2020). We also point to the broad social function of ironic markers—and their absence—as semi-permeable barriers distinguishing the (imagined) audience of the ironic utterance from those excluded from the discourse through their inability to decode it. The third paper based on my dissertation (Gal, under review) addresses the phenomenon of discursive sanctioning of failure to correctly interpret irony on social media. It examines how sanctioning responses to interpretive failures facilitate boundary work. I show how these responses execute acts of social inclusion or exclusion, introducing the concept of the *un-addressee*, an individual who, through their misinterpretation of irony, takes part both in the construction of the message and in the delineation of group boundaries.

My current postdoctoral research project, part of a larger project led by Dr. Roei Davidson and Dr. Eran Tamir, examines the phenomenon of interventions of high-tech companies in education. I am in charge of the portion of the research that examines discourse produced by these companies to communicate their social interventions to the general public. We apply qualitative discourse analysis of content from corporate websites, CSR reports, and social media platforms. Our aim is to identify both the underlying norms and values this discourse draws from and the boundary work conducted (or rather, being undone) through this discursive activity. At this stage, the analysis focuses on six global high-tech companies. Future research will consider two additional veins of inquiry: a cooperative analysis that will involve domestic companies and examine nation-related boundary work and values, and an exploration of educational interventions discourse revolving around the COVID-19 crisis.

My second postdoctoral project was recently awarded a highly competitive Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Social Sciences. In this research, I expand my exploration of linguistically driven boundary work by examining the use of limited access to contextual knowledge as a semi-permeable barrier in social segregation and collectivization processes. I examine how social media users harness gaps in contextual knowledge to engage in performative social boundary work, thereby achieving social segregation and/or collectivization in digital spheres. To explore the use of the *un-said* in social boundary work, I apply a critical discourse analysis approach while combining the principles of membership categorization analysis with performativity literature. I will return to two discursive fields I have previously engaged with: online irony and internal LGBT discourse. While my previous work on these discourses mostly examined the said, I will now turn my attention to the un-said and develop a novel approach to its analysis. I will also investigate the role of lexical choices in collectivization of marginalized communities. Building on the concepts of *cohesive/divisive polysemy*, as well as the *un-addressee*, I will deepen our understanding of the role of misinterpretation in social boundary and identity work. This study offers three distinct scholarly contributions. Empirically, it illuminates online social categorization practices based on gaps in access to contextual knowledge. Methodologically, it develops an innovative systematic analytical procedure to facilitate textual analyses of the un-said, rather than the said, in communication research. Finally, theoretically, it contributes to membership categorization analysis theory by incorporating categorization processes based on implicit cues and developing the novel notion of *performative membership categorization analysis*.

NOAM GAL

PROPOSED COURSES .

In addition to an introductory course on mass communication, new media, culture, language, research methods and academic writing, I would be happy to offer courses rooted in my areas of expertise, particularly social media, humor, and various aspects of critical discourse analysis. Three examples for such courses are detailed below.

Online humor as identity work (BA seminar)

Social media constitute a central arena for identity work in contemporary society, and various genres of humor are crucial to this work. This course examines the role of online humor in processes of collective identity construction. It examines the dialectics between social identity and humorous communication, and the significance of the participatory nature of social media communication within these dialectics. Students will get acquainted with literature dealing with social media, various genres of humor (nonsense, satire, parody, irony, memes), and identity work. Students will present examples of relevant humorous texts throughout the course and identify aspects of identity work emerging from them. They will also write a case study that explores these issues, focusing on a specific identity category of their choice and the online humor revolving around it.

Minority discourse on social media: Gender, ethnicity & nationality (BA seminar)

Social media facilitate constant segregation and collectivization of social groups. It enables the formation of these groups in distinct spaces while simultaneously creating opportunities for inter-group interaction. This context-collapsed arena leads to complex social dynamics within minority groups, between such groups, and between them and general hegemonic society. This course will explore these dynamics based on literature about social media and the media usage of minority groups. The course focuses on three central divides, namely, gender, ethnicity, and nationality, with an emphasis on how these play out in an Israeli context. Students will write a paper analyzing a case of inter- or intra-group social media discourse related to one social gap of their choice.

Misunderstandings, meaning multiplicity & the un-said in discourse (MA seminar)

Misunderstandings are predominantly perceived as undesirable lapses in communication. However, they also have significant productive potential to promote social collectivization and segregation, and expose transparent social norms. Based on literature about social media, meaning multiplicity, and misunderstandings, this course will explore both the conditions in which these discursive dynamics come into being and their social implications. Throughout the course, students will present one instance of such an interaction and provide a brief analysis based on the literature included in the syllabus. Students will also write a paper in which they analyze an instance of interpretive failure and discuss the potential productive and counterproductive social implications of their chosen case.