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Lexical Features of Social Media Discourse

Kryštof Halámka

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## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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Jméno a příjmení: **Kryštof Halámka**  
Osobní číslo: **H15272**  
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**  
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### Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Cílem bakalářské práce je zmapovat a zhodnotit užití vybraných lexikálních prostředků v diskurzu sociálních médií. Student nejprve představí a charakterizuje jazyk sociálních sítí a jeho specifika, dále krátce uvede rozdíly mezi mluveným a psaným jazykem na rovině stylistické. Na základě studia relevantní odborné literatury definuje neformální mluvený jazyk a popíše jeho vliv na komunikaci v diskurzu sociálních médií, zejména směřování ke zkratkovitosti a zjednodušování. Zaměří se především na vybrané jazykové prostředky neformálního jazyka (např. akronymy, zkratky, tagy, emotikony), které vydefiniuje a podrobně popíše z hlediska formy a funkce. Následně provede analýzu vybraných autentických příspěvků s cílem identifikovat zkoumané jazykové prostředky, zmapovat jejich frekvenci užití a charakterizovat kontexty výskytu. Na závěr student objasní užití analyzovaných lexikálních prostředků s ohledem na funkci diskurzu sociálních médií a zhodnotí jejich vliv na komunikaci v sociálních sítích.

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Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

**PhDr. Petra Huschová, Ph.D.**

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

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prof. PhDr. Karel Rýdl, CSc.  
děkan

 Univerzita Pardubice  
Fakulta filozofická  
532 10 Pardubice, Studentská 94

L.S.

doc. Sárka Bubíková, Ph.D.  
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 31. října 2017

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## **ANNOTATION**

This bachelor thesis deals with the use of non-standard lexical features on popular social media. The paper describes several issues related to social media discourse, the effects of language informality and spoken language on it, as well as the non-standard lexical features in detail. The analytical part of the thesis focuses on the use of specific non-standard lexical features, on the frequency of their occurrence within specific social media sites, as well as on their meaning and the authors' motivations for using them.

## **KEYWORDS**

lexical features, social media, written discourse, communication, internet, language formality

## **NÁZEV PRÁCE**

Lexikální rysy jazyka na sociálních sítích

## **ANOTACE**

Tato práce pojednává o využití nestandardních lexikálních rysů jazyka sociálních sítí. V teoretické části je popisováno několik témat týkajících se jazyka sociálních sítí, vlivů nízké míry jazykové formality a mluveného jazyka, které na jazyk sociálních sítí působí; dále jsou podrobně rozepsány jednotlivé nestandardní prvky a jejich funkce. Praktická část práce, tvořená analýzou se zabývá využitím konkrétních nestandardních lexikálních prvků, jejich četností výskytu v rámci jednotlivých sociálních sítí, a také jejich významem a důvody autorů pro jejich užití.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

lexikální rysy, sociální sítě, psaný jazyk, komunikace, internet, jazyková formalita

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## **0 INTRODUCTION**

With the origin of the Internet, new ways of communication came into existence. People suddenly gained the ability to communicate among themselves in real time, no matter the distance. The communication via the Internet has brought together several unique elements creating a specific environment with specific language features.

The aim of this thesis is to explore these features. More specifically, the thesis aims to introduce the discourse of social media in terms of language formality and the influence of spoken language on it. The work focuses mostly on occurrence of non-standard lexical features in social media discourse, their meaning, and the authors' motivations for using them. Special attention is given to emoticons, emojis, abbreviations, acronyms, hashtags, tagging, excessive punctuation, and excessive capitalization, for these are considered to be essential in the Internet communication.

The theoretical part of the thesis describes crucial terms related to the goal of the thesis. That includes social media discourse itself, language formality, introduction of chosen social media, and finally, detailed description of the aforementioned non-standard lexical features. The analytical part examines the use of the features in the discourse of chosen social media. It is focused on the quantity of the features used, the emotional motivations of the authors, if there are any, as well as on the interpretation of the results. It needs to be stated that such interpretations might be subjective, as some of the occurrences may be highly context-dependent.

# 1 SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE

## 1.1 COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

When describing standard language and discourse of social media, it is appropriate to begin with the term *Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)*. Simpson (2002, 414) claims that “CMC is an umbrella term which refers to human communication via computers. Temporally, a distinction can be made between synchronous CMC, where interaction takes place in real time, and asynchronous CMC, where participants are not necessarily online simultaneously.” Synchronous CMC includes several types of online communication. For instance, online chats, computer, video, and audio conferencing, as Simpson suggests. Graybill (2010, 54) puts emphasis especially on online chat rooms, which is the closest to the CMC’s shape that is seen today. Facebook’s group chat, which will be described in further chapters, can work as a variation of chat rooms mentioned by Simpson or Graybill, however, chat types such as Facebook’s standard one-to-one chat are the most used tool for online communication and they do not require the users to be online in order to receive a message. It is usually expected, but the users can read the message and reply to it later. Therefore, a more appropriate label would be *semi-synchronous CMC*, meaning, the user can either choose to treat the chat as synchronous or asynchronous.

Asynchronous CMC does not require users to be online at all (Simpson 2002, 414). The sender can send a message via platforms such as emails or discussion forums, and the receiver can read it whenever he or she comes online. In social media context, the closest to the standard concept of asynchronous CMC are, for instance, Facebook’s posts and comments, Instagram comments, or tweets and replies on Twitter.

Rulik (2006, 17) remarks that “the synchronicity of CMC thus brings it close to face-to-face conversation and the spoken language.” That is supported by Graybill’s (2010, 54) thought on considering synchronous or real-time communication identical with communication between two people face-to-face. Simpson’s definition of synchronous CMC also indirectly supports the similarity between real-time online communication and standard human interaction (2002, 414).

The whole general CMC concept including both synchronous and asynchronous can be applied onto social media discourse since the original CMC is parallel with today’s social network communication. The platforms have changed but the original idea remains; with an

exception of above-defined semi-synchronous CMC, that, however does not interfere with the aim of the thesis.

## 1.2 SOCIAL MEDIA BEHAVIOUR

The actual language that people use on social media, or within CMC in general, is often connected to one thing. Identity. If people want to communicate face-to-face, they need to present themselves in some way; the same applies to CMC. When people communicate online, they create an image of themselves, an identity, and it is done so through the language they use.

Some aspects of identity are relatively static and not easy to change, such as age, gender, and nationality. Other aspects are defined by social domains (e.g. work, family, and education) and relationships (e.g. friends, colleagues, and family). Some forms of identity can change from time to time, such as hobbies, interests and social networks. (Lee 2014, 91)

However, identity in CMC can be rather fluid and can change based on the language the users use. As Lee (2014, 91) confirms: “Identities [...] are like masks that can be worn and taken off in different contexts of social interaction.” This suggests that in order to present oneself in a particular way, to create a particular identity, it is common to change one’s language manners in line with specific context. There is another type of identity. The one described above could be classified as *individual*, whereas a *group* identity can emerge too. Crystal mentions hackers as a group of people realizing their own group identity in the world of the Internet, and suggests that people tend to form groups of similar interests and backgrounds (2004, 69). Both of these types of identities can reflect the language used within CMC; individual identity can be changed along with the language and can be preserved within the group identity; group identity associates people in specific areas which causes the discourse within the groups to be identical or similar for the people in the group as they might need to use the same vocabulary, for example a group of sportsmen.

Lee (2014, 99) presents an example in her work where a student was supposed to communicate with his or her teacher via email for the purposes of homework, and afterwards could chat with the teacher about music via ICQ (a messaging platform).

When an email took the form of a piece of homework, the participants would take a longer time to proofread and polish their language; when online communication is taken to a more interpersonal level, such as Yan’s private interaction with her teacher, ‘not much editing’ was needed. (Lee 2014, 99)

Such sort of private communication may tend to a certain level of informality.

As Tannen and Trester (2013, 9) suggest, such an informal behavior is frequent within CMC. Same as Paolillo (1999), they mention, for instance, replacing regular letters with numbers or other signs resembling the original letters or using emoticons; emoticons will be described in greater detail later in the thesis. Those features and more are common in CMC, but not standard in offline discourse, as Paolillo's work implies.

Since IRC messages are typed at a keyboard, there is a tendency to use conventions of written English, particularly spelling. Yet, as indicated in examples 1–5, a number of distinctive IRC spelling practices have emerged some of which can be found on many channels. The practices in examples 2, 3 and 4, namely substituting the letters u and r for the English words you and are, and substituting z for s, especially in word-final position, are three such IRC spellings. All three spellings diverge from standard written English [...] (Paolillo 1999)

Furthermore, Tannen (2013, 104) continues describing social media discourse and its variability in relation to age or gender.

Many aspects of social media discourse that tend to differ from one group to another can be understood as associated with high-involvement as contrasted with high-considerateness conversational style. [...] Among users of new media, the differing uses—and contrasting interpretations of those uses—tend to pattern by age and gender. (Tannen 2013, 104)

Crystal (2004, 34) describes more necessary informal features of CMC that lie on the same level as abovementioned letter-replacing od using emoticons;

examples include repeated letters (aaaaahhhh, hiiiiiii, oops, soooo), repeated punctuation marks (no more!!!!, whohe????, hey!!!!!!!!, see what you started????????????????), and the following range of emphatic conventions:

all capitals for 'shouting':	I SAID NO
letter spacing for 'loud and clear':	W H Y N O T, w h y n o t
word/phrase emphasis by asterisks:	the *real * answer

Crystal (2004, 35)

Tannen and Trester neglect the use of vulgarisms and explicit language on social media, which is highly common and used in social media discourse, however, both Crystal (2004, 27) and Paolillo (1999) pay attention to the use of obscene language as an inseparable part of CMC; moreover Paolillo (1999) explains that rudeness might be related to toughness and masculinity in terms of self-presentation and identity. There is also another factor that encourages people to use obscene informal language, it is the users' seeming anonymity on the Internet.

## 1.3 FORMALITY

### 1.3.1 FORMALITY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Language can vary in terms of its formality. Leech (2002, 11) defines formal language as the type of language people use for some serious purpose; some of the examples he gives are: business letters, or official reports; whereas Heylighen and Dewaele (1999, 1) define formal language as detached, accurate, rigid and heavy. In English, formal language is mostly used in the written form, with the exception on formal public speeches. Heylighen and Dewaele (1999, 1) also define informal language as more flexible, direct, implicit, and involved, but less informative; although, their definitions are accurate, they are too complex and abstract for the aim of the thesis. Leech's definitions will be used for they are more specific and easier to follow. "Informal language (*ie* colloquial language) is the language of private conversation, of personal letters, etc. It is the first type of language that a native-speaking child becomes familiar with. Because it is generally easier to understand than formal English." (Leech 2002, 12) Furthermore, the wide use of informal spoken English is given due to its simplicity in contrast with grammatical complexity of written structures (Leech 2002, 11). In other words, spoken English tend to be informal simply because it is easier for the speaker; written language provides the author with more time and space to structure sentences formally if needed. As following examples that Leech used in his work illustrate, language cannot be identified as merely formal or informal:

- a) When his dad died, Pete had to get another job.
- b) After his father's death, Peter had to change his job.
- c) On the decease of his father, Mr Brown was obliged to seek alternative employment.

The sentences have nearly identical meaning; however, formality differs in each of them. Thus, scaling formality by levels is more appropriate than using a simple formal-informal division. As Leech (2002, 12) remarks, each of the sentences could be used in different contexts; the first could serve in a casual conversation between friends; the second, rather neutral, would fit in a communication between people who do not know one another very well; the third, very formal, would fit in an official report of some kind. Holmes (2013, 10) also indicates the importance of context, or setting, as he puts it. Also, he defines the abovementioned *levels* as *scale*, which is also appropriate for the complex character of language formality.

This scale is useful in assessing the influence of the social setting or type of interaction on language choice. In a formal transaction such as one with the bank manager in his office, or at a ritual service in church, the language used will be influenced by the formality of the setting. For a friendly chat, people generally use colloquial language. (Holmes 2013, 10)

Formality, however, is not reflected only in the lexical part of language. It projects into the grammatical part as well; as shown in the following example given by Leech (2002, 13):

- a) In what country was he born? - *formal*
- b) What country was he born in? - *informal*

Placing the preposition *in* to the end of the sentence makes it informal, whereas keeping it at the beginning of the sentence has a result of the sentence remaining formal.

### **1.3.2 FORMALITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE**

Tetreault and Pavlick's (2016, 69) study suggests that people tend to use language of higher formality while discussing topics such as Economics, Middle East, Creationism, Math; whereas Sciences, Government etc., use highly informal language in relation to Fun or Entertainment, and use rather neutral language with topics like Crime or Religion. However, they point out that each of the topics involved in the study included both formal and informal posts. Eldursi (2013, 34), on the other hand, based on his study, claims that the internet users, blog authors in particular, tend to use more formal language while contributing to the topics like Politics or Sports, whereas tend to be less formal when interacting with topics of Family or Personal character. Use of contractions on blogs has been measured by Eldursi as well; contractions may be considered as a means of informal language, however, in Politics as in a top-scored topic, the largest number of contractions occurred in contrast with the second highest formal topic, Sports, that had the lowest occurrence of contractions (Eldursi 2013, 48). That indicates that the connection between formality and contractions in Eldursi's study was rather random. However, Baker and Ellece (2011, 61) have clearly stated that contracted forms belong into informal language along with five other indicators of informal language. Baker and Ellece's interpretation will be taken into consideration while conducting the analytical part of this thesis, since Elduri's study used *F-score*, the most popular measuring method for scaling formality, and Elduri (2013, 48) himself questions its reliability.

Bilal, Mubashra, Akram, and Shahzada's (2013, 295) research showed that within private one-to-one CMC, a majority of users tend to use informal language; which is core for

this thesis as it deals with non-standard features of language. Bilal, Mubashra, Akram, and Shahzada (2013, 295) say that “the qualitative and quantitative data has confirmed that stylistic expression of CMC are more inclined towards informality which may in turn be associated with a number of socio-cultural and political factors.” Therefore, vast majority of users of CMC, thus of social media as well, tend to use colloquial language. An exception may be companies and businesses that preserve formality even on social media in order to reach their customers in a standard way. Such companies create a noticeable part of social media users (Chaykowski 2015), however, a lot for the companies use the strategy of informal communication via social media.

Referring to Fielding and Fraser (1978), Tetreault and Pablick (2016, 69) adopt the idea “that informality is an important way of expressing closeness with someone, and thus formality should be higher when speakers dislike one another.” That, however, does not apply onto CMC where people tend to become rude, obscene and vulgar due to their anonymity, as described in previous chapters; therefore, informality is often a sign of speaker’s aversion to the recipient.

#### **1.4 SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE**

As suggested in the previous subchapter, informal language dominates social media discourse. This subchapter, deals with the influence of spoken language, as spoken language is rather informal, in its written form on social media.

Leech points out obvious differences between spoken and written English, such as the fact that when people are writing a text, they usually have time to plan the message and revise it after it has been written. In speech, however, the speaker does not have the time to do so as the message he or she conveys needs to be formed as the speech flows; with an exception of lectures or public speeches prepared in advance (1975, 11).

Often we use speech words and phrases like *well*, *you see*, and *kind of* which add little information, but tell us something of the speaker’s attitude to his audience and to what he is saying. We also often hesitate, or fill in gaps with ‘hesitation fillers’ like *er* /ɜ:(r)/ or *um* /əm/ while we think of what next to say. (Leech 2002, 11)

As other markers of spoken language, Leech (2002, 11) presents the possibility of failure to complete a sentence or losing track of the sentences, resulting in mixing grammatical constructions. Furthermore, he remarks that such features, as well as occurrence of intonation, do not usually appear in written discourse.

Leech considers both written and spoken language equal in importance (1975, 11), as does Vachek (1973, 15), who also explicitly says that spoken language tends to channel the speaker's emotions. Vachek also defines the written language

as a system of graphically manifestable language elements whose function is to react to a given stimulus (which, as a rule, is not an urgent one) in a static way, i. e. in preservable and easily surveyable manner, concentrating particularly on the purely communicative aspect of the approach of the reacting language user. (1973, 15)

Similarly, Crystal (2004, 26) defines written discourse as *static, space-bound, permanent*, plus compares it to the spoken language, which he defines as dynamic and time-bound. Furthermore, parallel with Leech's comparison, Crystal claims that in spoken discourse,

there is an opportunity to rethink an utterance while the other person is listening (starting again, adding a qualification). However, errors, once spoken, cannot be withdrawn; the speaker must live with the consequences. Interruptions and overlapping speech are normal and highly audible. (2004, 27)

While in written language, "errors and other perceived inadequacies in our writing can be eliminated in later drafts without the reader ever knowing they were there. Interruptions, if they have occurred while writing, are also invisible in the final product." (Crystal 2004, 27)

From the paragraphs above, it is understandable that there is clear distinction between spoken and written discourse. They are both influenced by each other, and informality, typical for spoken language has influenced social media written language and has become very frequent in CMC in general. That is given by synchronous or semi-synchronous nature of the most used CMC methods. As people within synchronous online communication tend to react in real-time, the concept is brought closer to a real-life face-to-face conversation. Synchronous CMC thus tend to partially eliminate one of the main differences between spoken and written language, that is, limiting the users' ability to correct their errors and to prepare themselves for the communication. To bring synchronous CMC even closer to spoken language, the informality that has been brought into written CMC, occur in various forms whose goal is to reproduce fundamental features of spoken discourse, such as expressing emotions, attitudes, moods, certainty, seriousness, sarcasm; shortening the language; being more precise than standard written language allows etc. There are several non-standard features that represent such forms, for instance emoticons, emojis, abbreviations, acronyms, hashtags, tags, excessive capitalization or punctuation etc. Those will be described in detail in the chapter three of the thesis.

## **2 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

This chapter introduces the social media used in the analytical part of the thesis and focuses on the variations of CMC they use.

### **2.1 FACEBOOK IN SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE**

Facebook, being available in more than 100 languages (Maňáková 2018, 41), is currently one of the most popular social networking websites. For March 2018 only, Facebook registered 1.45 billion daily active users and 2.2 billion monthly active users. The company itself employs 27,742 people as of the last day of March 2018 (Facebook 2018). In 2006, when Facebook expanded so everyone in the world could use it, the number of active users reached 12 million people. In one year, the number had increased by 46 million more active users. That is an amount of people that radio had gathered as its audience in 38 years (Graybill 2010, 7).

Graybill claims that it actually took Facebook two years to reach the target audience, however according to the official statistics of the company, it took exactly one year to go from 12 million to 58 million people (Facebook 2018). If the launch of Facebook is considered as a starting point of the user count comparison, it would be more than three years to reach the abovementioned milestone. All of that suggests the size of the impact it may have on people's lives and the way they interact. "People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them. (Facebook 2018)" That is why for most people Facebook has become a necessary tool for communication. It is easy, it is simple, and it is comfortable. There are several ways of using Facebook for communication.

The three most widely accessible are private messaging, available not only for direct one to one messaging, but allowing to engage more people in a group conversation, Facebook Timeline, which allows people to see what other people, companies, and Facebook pages have publicly shared, and lastly, the groups. The groups allow people to communicate within circles with specific interest, they can be either public or private.

Each of the three mentioned ways are designed, to some degree, for communication between people, or between people and companies; and each of them uses specific lexical features. Also, all the three methods of Facebook communication can be used either on a computer-based platform or a mobile platform, be it an actual mobile phone, tablet or any other mobile device, via a mobile application. That makes twice the number of opportunities and

ways of communication that people, the users, can work with. Same as three different means of communication affect the use of lexical features by the users, the mobile application provides yet more ways to allow people to express themselves on the Internet. Mobile platforms tend to be used while people do other things and cannot pay attention fully to the ongoing online communication, therefore people like to interact as fast as possible, which is possible due to emoticons, emojis, images etc.

As mentioned before, Facebook consists of more than just three communication channels. The rest of the channels include, for instance, personal profiles, virtual events (Graybill 2010, 7), or Marketplace, which are less important for the goal of the thesis. However, all of these include certain level of communication. Facebook personal profiles not only allow the users to gather information from groups, pages, virtual events, etc., but also, as Graybill suggests, provide them with an opportunity to represent themselves to others in a way they want (2010, 7), which is often reflected in the degree of formality used in the discourse of personal profiles. Matějka (2011, 37) compares Facebook profiles to Facebook Wall, today's Facebook Timeline, which is not very accurate since profiles are fixed and can be changed only if someone does it on purpose. The Wall or Timeline changes on its own, it is rather fluid since all users can contribute, unlike the profile feature. Facebook has undergone countless of updates since Matějka declared the comparison, however these changes have deepened the gap between Timeline and the profiles, especially in users' communication and interaction. In terms of communication, profiles are used for sharing political and entertaining content as well as all kinds of opinions on current world affairs, music and so on. However, the trend of opinion sharing has gradually moved from Facebook to Twitter, which will be described later in the thesis, that is why Facebook profiles are not widely considered in the thesis.

## **2.2 INSTAGRAM IN SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE**

It is necessary to point out that Instagram originated as a unique concept that was bought by Facebook later during its existence (Instagram 2018), therefore it shares a lot of common features as well as common patterns of communication and user interaction.

While Facebook was designed for communication and bringing people together, and was computer-based at first, Instagram was created exclusively as a mobile application designed for photo-sharing and is the most popular in its field (Alhabash and Ma 2017, 2). Similarly as Facebook, it allows sharing photos, videos and images. However, Instagram focuses solely on visual content. This is where it is relatively limited as opposed to Facebook.

In spite of that, Instagram has managed to become the third most popular social media platform. In 2018, Instagram reached the number of 800 million active monthly users with an increase of 200 million users since 2017. That makes it one of the fastest growing social networking platform in the world. However, the largest age group using Instagram are people from 18 to 24 years old, whereas with Facebook, the major group includes people from 25 to 34 years old (Statista 2018). This affects the formality degree that occurs on Instagram, making it a less formal environment, which may possibly result in higher occurrence of non-standard lexical features on the platform.

As indicated before, Instagram works mainly with visuals. It allows users not only to take or upload pictures, but to edit them in a lot of ways, including popular adding filters, and afterwards to share it with users' followers (Alhabash and Ma 2017, 2). As it is with Facebook profiles, Instagram brings the opportunity to present its users in a way they want. Same as Facebook, it provides the users with a personal profile where they can public their visual content, moreover there is a news feed where the users can see the other users' content – it is the same concept as Facebook's Timeline; then there is Direct, private messaging system which is in many ways similar to Facebook's Messenger. What is more distinctive for Instagram is the concept of *Stories*, Facebook has a similar feature too but it is not as widely used as Instagram Stories.

Instagram Stories or My Story is one of the most significant parts of Instagram. As Amâncio (2017, 13) indicates, it allows its users to share any visual content for a 24-hours period of time, after the 24 hours the content disappears becoming available only to the author. Of course, there are restrictions stemming from Instagram's terms of use that do not allow publishing specific content. Amâncio specifies the My Story feature as a feature that allows only the followers of a user to watch the Stories. That is not, however, entirely correct since anyone can watch a Story even if they are not following the user who shared the Story. The only exception is when the user's profile is set to private. It is possible to edit the Stories before publishing. A user can do so with emojis, stickers, filters etc. (Amâncio 2017, 15). So far, Instagram Stories feature appears only as a tool of sharing, one-sided way of communication. However, Stories offer the viewers to react either with a simple emoji or with a text message. Due to that, people can interact even within this seemingly one-sided 24-hour concept. A situation, where a photo of a cake is posted on an Instagram Story and someone reacts with a textual comment with an added emoji expressing for instance admiration or disgust, can serve as an example. Such interaction starts with the Story but moves to Direct.

When comparing Facebook and Instagram, the main difference is that Instagram was the first of its kind. The first *mobile* social platform (Miles 2014, 4). Facebook originated as a web site, whereas Instagram, right from the beginning, launched as a mobile application. This has massively influenced the way people communicate via Instagram. The interactions are more rushed, similarly to the Facebook's other mobile platforms. That results in an occurrence of different means of communication, bringing new lexical features into play. The most prominent one being hashtags. Hashtags are usually short pieces of text following the hash sign. They are used for easier orientation on the Internet. Detailed description will be given in chapter three of the thesis. Hashtags are a part of one of the most important means of Instagram communication, which is simply sharing images or videos on a person's or company's account while tagging the post with hashtags, geotagging, tagging other people etc. Other people can usually comment on these posts creating a standard interaction between the author and its audience. This was the original concept that has been within Instagram from the beginning, and will serve as one of the sources for the research of this thesis.

### **2.3 TWITTER IN SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE**

Twitter, unlike Instagram or Facebook, has not grown much since 2017. While both Instagram and Facebook have grown by more than 200 million active monthly users, the number of Twitter's active monthly users has increased by mere 9 million users making it slightly more than 300 million active monthly users in total (Statista 2018). Yet it remains one of the most important social media sites. That is due to Twitter's popularity among politicians, movie stars and other celebrity-like personas.

As stated before, opinion sharing has moved from Facebook to Twitter. Based on how many people use Facebook, it is impossible that more people would be expressing themselves via Twitter rather than Facebook. Regular people still use Facebook, however Twitter is a more likely candidate for popular figures either in politics or in the entertainment business, since it is well designed for expressing short ideas and opinions. Celebrities tend to prefer it over other social media, hence Twitter seems to be more in the spotlight than other similar platforms when it comes to opinion sharing, even though the number of its users is significantly smaller than, for instance, Facebook's.

It has been said that Twitter is well designer for expressing opinions. To understand why it may be better than other social media it is necessary to understand how Twitter works. "Twitter has been categorized as a microblogging site, where users interact in "real time" using

140 character tweets to their followers (Alhabash and Ma 2017, 2).” The 140-character concept came from the SMS messaging system that Twitter was supposed to work with. The system allowed only 160 characters per message while 20 of the characters were reserved for the name space and the rest for the actual message (Rogers 2014). During the early stage of Twitter, it was rather similar to Facebook since it was based on following friends and communication with them. However, there was and still is one major difference. Sarno suggests, that a user comes into contact not with the Friends themselves but rather with what they produce (2009). That is the major difference between the two web sites. On Facebook, a user profile is a key part and a source of information for other users, whereas on Twitter, user profiles do not provide any valuable information. The content these profiles or users generate is what has the largest value in terms of Twitter usage. The users absorb only what others produce, unlike with Facebook or Instagram where a user can consume information from user profiles. That makes Twitter a unique and better tool for expressing ideas since user profiles are not that significant.

This is also why Twitter may not be considered as a social network, but rather as a news media, as Kwak, Lee, Park, and Moon (2010) characterized it the work of Weller et al. (2014, 196). They suggested that the users communicate with their audiences in a manner that goes only one way, towards the audience, therefore the users neglect both-ways interaction within social circles; as it is with Facebook and its concept of reactions and comments, or abovementioned Instagram Stories and the users’ option to reply to them. However, this one-way concept of Twitter is no longer up to date since Twitter changed it in 2009 (Rogers 2014). In 2009, Twitter started to change. It became less about people sharing their lives to their audiences and more about people sharing opinions on news, culture, politics, and other popular topics to other people who would start reacting making Twitter more social-circle based while still maintaining its opinion-sharing character. This opinion-sharing trend has also affected the way formality appears on Twitter; as the shared content tends to get more serious over time, the formality degree increases as well.

There are other reasons why Twitter is more suitable for opinion sharing than, for example, Facebook. Facebook requires mutual confirmation of a friend request creating social circles. Twitter, same as Instagram, makes the links between users on the platform directed (Huberman, Romero and Wu 2008, 3); which means that users do not need to be followed by other users in order to follow them (Kwak, Lee, Park, and Moon 2010). That indicates that some traces of the one-way concept mentioned above have been preserved and create Twitter’s identity, to a certain degree. However, similarities to Facebook do exist. Especially when

considering the system of interaction and communication between users. As Kwak, Lee, Park, and Moon observe

Being a follower on Twitter means that the user receives all the messages (called tweets) from those the user follows. Common practice of responding to a tweet has evolved into well-defined markup culture: RT stands for retweet, '@' followed by a user identifier address the user, and '#' followed by a word represents a hashtag. (2010)

The Retweet feature serves to share other users' opinions via the profiles of the retweeting users passing the content to a broader audience. That is identical with Facebook's *Share* feature. Apart from retweeting, Twitter also offers the option of commenting on tweets, similar to commenting on Facebook's posts; and directly messaging the users, similar to Instagram's Direct.

### **3 NON-STANDARD LANGUAGE MEANS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

In this chapter, some of the non-standard features influenced by informal and spoken discourse will be described, as they are crucial for the analytical part of this thesis. The reasons for choosing these particular features over others will be given in each sub-chapter. All the included features, however, use a parental scope of expressing emotions in their sub-categories in order to identify their meaning and their authors' motivations for their use; this categorization based on emotions, not lexical items, will be further described by the end of the analytical part of the thesis.

#### **3.1 EMOTICONS AND EMOJIS**

Some of the most used non-standard lexical elements used within CMC are emoticons, as they are very popular for showing people's expressions in textual form; they are an original version of emojis, expressing the same – emotions, attitudes, etc. Some social media sites, especially Facebook, tend to automatically convert emoticons into emojis. For these reasons, as well as for their uniqueness, emoticons and emojis will be linked to a single category and included in the analysis.

The term *emoticons* is used by Crystal (2006, 36) who puts it, as “combinations of keyboard characters designed to show an emotional facial expression.” These characters are placed at the very end of a sentence after the final punctuation mark and are typed in a form of a sequence, making the combination of characters look like a facial expression. (Crystal 2006, 36) Due to the ASCII code, which is used in computer-mediated communication and is responsible for the existence of these characters, it is set that most emoticons are read sideways. Similarly, Danesi (2009, 110) defines the term as “string of keyboard characters that, when viewed sideways (or in some other orientation), can be seen to suggest a face expressing a particular emotion.”

Despite the similarities in the definitions of Crystal (2006, 36) and Danesi (2009, 110), Crystal (2006, 36) point out an important observation or a rule that a finished and properly punctuated sentence should precede an emoticon. It is reasonable to assume that Danesi does not include this as a part of his definition of emoticons, since his work was created slightly later. This is because the definition of such a recent term has continued to evolve since its very first appearance and Danesi may not consider the rule about emoticons being at the end of a sentence

important, relevant, or up-to-date. Having mentioned the recent origin of emoticons it is more than convenient to include Azuma and Ebner's (2008) definition of emoticons, which is almost identical; however, their definition includes the origin of emoticons, that is the year of 1982 when Scott Fahlman used an ASCII emoticon at the end of a sentence to express that the sentence was meant as a joke (Azuma and Ebner, 2008).

To summarize the points of view on fundamental definitions of emoticons of the abovementioned scholars, they all agree that emoticons consist of ASCII (keyboard) characters that are put in a sequence and read sideways in order to accomplish their purpose of expressing human emotions. Except Crystal (2006, 36) points out marking a fixed position of emoticons in his definition. For the goals of this thesis, the Danesi's basic definition is used, for it does not include Crystal's outdated position rule and is more extensive than the definition of Azuma and Ebner.

As for the extensive interpretation of emoticons, Crystal (2006, 34) states that emoticons as paralinguistic of computer-mediated communication have to be consciously inserted in the text in order to express emotions; as it is their purpose. The absence of emoticons, however, does not necessarily mean that a writer lacks the emotion at the moment. "In face-to-face communication, someone may grin over several utterances, and the effect be noted." Crystal (2006, 34) In computer-mediated communication, "a 'grin' emoticon might be added to just one utterance, although the speaker may continue to 'feel' the relevant emotion over several turns. There is also no guarantee that the person who sends a 'grin' is actually grinning at all." Crystal (2006, 36) differentiates two basic types of emoticons:

a) :-) :)

b) :-( :(

The former type expressing positive attitudes, happiness, etc. and the latter expressing negative attitudes, sadness, etc. Azuma and Ebner (2008) too mention the " :-) " emoticon as a commonly known expression of a positive feeling. However, Azuma and Ebner consider important other emoticons, not so often used on the Internet in Europe and western countries, more specifically they deal with emoticons used in Japanese computer-mediated communication, which is outside the scope of this thesis, therefore will not be given any high importance in this work. Nevertheless, the classification of emoticons is much more complex since there are hundreds of emoticons and thousands of emojis, a version of emoticons that will be described later, being

used on the Internet these days. Yet another sign of the possibility of Crystal's definition being outdated; he mentions a number of other emoticons but does not classify them.

Danesi (2009, 110) further analyzes emoticons as elements "often used in an e-mail message or newsgroup posting as a comment on the text that accompanies it" noting the basic types:

- a) :-) :)
- b) ;-) ;)
- c) :-O:O

He calls the first couple a "smiley", the second a "winkey", and the third a "yawn". The last being a suitable example of ambiguous emoticon, which in his words expresses a "yawn" but working as another example it can also express surprise, astonishment or wonder; in the current CMC, it is more common for the emoticon to be used as it is presented in the latter example. That means that both Danesi and Crystal recognize " :-) " or " :)" as an emoticon expressing positive feelings but each of them considers rather different emoticons important for classifying the basic types.

The aforementioned term *emoji* can be defined as "an English adaptation of Japanese 絵文字—the e of emoji means 'picture' and the moji stands for 'letter, character.' So, the definition of emoji is, simply, a 'picture-word' (Danesi 2017, 2)." In 2015, an emoji called "Face with Tears of Joy" 😄 was chosen as the "Word of the Year" (Danesi 2017), signaling a worldwide acceptance of the shift in CMC and linguistics that had occurred in 1998 when emojis were, for the first time, created and used by a Japanese telecommunications worker Shigetaka Kurita. Kelly (2015, 15) supports the definition and emphasizes the many elements emojis can express; for example, facial expressions, activities, animals etc.

The main function of emoticons has set the basis of further classifications of emoticons, emojis and other lexical items. Therefore, the subcategorization is based on the emotional expressions and is following:

- a) Emoticons and emojis that expressed negative attitude or emotions such as anger, annoyance, frustration, etc.

- Typical examples of this sub-category can be :(, 🙄, 😡, 😠, 😞, etc.

- b) Emoticons and emojis that expressed negative attitude or emotions such as sadness, powerlessness, or disappointment
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be :( , :'( , :/, 😞 , 😓 , 😞 , 😞 , 😞 , etc.
- c) Emoticons and emojis that expressed positive attitude or emotions such as excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be :) , :D , 😍 , 😊 , 😂 , etc.
- d) Emoticons and emojis that expressed amusement
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be 😂 , :XD , :D , etc.
- e) Other

As it can be seen in the examples, some of them overlap. That suggests the importance of interpretation and context of the texts in which they appear. Thus, analyzing a meaning of specific lexical feature, be it emoticon, emoji or another non-standard item, is highly context-dependent and interpretation cannot be done separately.

### 3.2 HASHTAGS

Similar issue accompanies hashtags. Hashtags have become an inseparable part of today's CMC over the last years. They are used in almost every social media site, but are rather typical for Twitter or Instagram. Hashtag is a form of social tagging that allows internet users to insert metadata in social media posts (Zappavigna 2015, 1). This indicates that their use is meant to be mostly functional, however, it appears frequently in social media discourse, therefore, hashtags are included in the thesis as well to see whether there are any emotional motivations for their use besides their originally functional purpose.

Zappavigna claims that hashtags are crucial in the area of social media discourse searchability, and are considered as topic-markers. She also points out the connection between people using hashtags on social media, which is different from standard mutual connection creating social circles, for example on Facebook, as described in previous chapters; and also, different from regular non-mutual relations where following usually does not need to be returned, as on Twitter or Instagram. Zappavigna (2015, 1) indicates that "the connections are 'ambient' in the sense that other users are potentially present within the social network, but not

necessarily linked together through connections between user accounts, or by direct conversational exchanges.”

Hashtags always include the hash ‘#’ symbol at the beginning of the tag, following it with a word, phrase, clause, acronym, etc. (Zappavigna 2015, 2). However, Giannoulakis and Tsapatsoulis (2016, 115) define them as simply tags or words with a preceding ‘#’ symbol, which is a rather insufficient description. Nevertheless, they define hashtags in relation with their Instagram use, pointing out that they allow users to search for pictures and increase their visibility (Giannoulakis and Tsapatsoulis 2016, 115); which agrees with Zappavigna, just in different, Instagram-oriented, context. Hashtags usually exclude interpunction, but often include capitalization; as shown in the following examples:

- a) #IceBucketChallenge
- b) #dontkillseanbean
- c) #bvs
- d) #coachella

The first serves as a typical topic-marking feature. The second may mark certain attitude of the authors, people sharing the hashtag. The third and the last express involvement in a specific activity; a film or a music festival.

Javed and Lee (2017, 140) focus on hashtags’ specific use rather than on their metadata character, emphasizing their use for telling jokes, following topics, advertising, getting consumer feedback, etc. In their paper, however, they mention the use of hashtags for the purpose of indexing the tweets included in their analysis suggesting that their and Zappavigna’s perception of hashtags as a tool that allows searchability is identical.

Since hashtags are used mostly for achieving functional goals, their use in emotionally-motivated context is expected to be very dependent on the other elements, vocabulary, and grammatical features in the text; nevertheless, as they are frequently used, it is reasonable to find out whether there are any other motivations besides the functional ones. Hashtags have been sub-categorized in relation to the emotional context of the emoticon categorization, as seen below:

- a) Hashtags that are used to show negative attitude or emotions such as anger, annoyance, frustration, etc.
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be #HateIt, #WhyDidTheyDoIt, etc.
- b) Hashtags expressing negative attitude or emotions such as sadness, powerlessness, or disappointment
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be #RIP, #SoSad, #why
- c) Hashtags that express positive attitude or emotions such as excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be #KeepGoing, #happy, #GoodJob
- d) Hashtags that express amusement
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be #haha, #lol, #funny
- e) Hashtags expressing support to certain topics, ideologies, music, films, etc.
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be #MAGA, #WonderWoman, #Obama
- f) Other

The basic sub-categorization is similar to emoticons and emojis, however, a functional category of support has been added, since the items in this category might be emotionally neutral and yet very important.

### 3.3 TAGS

There is another popular method of tagging. A method that uses the '@' symbol. Its purpose is to allow users to tag other people, pages and users in social media posts. Seargeant and Tagg (2014, 166) point out its typical use on Facebook when trying to draw a user's attention to a certain post or picture, who is then notified. Zappavigna (2014, 139) mentions this example:

- a) @Tim I love #coffee too

Combining the two tagging methods and showing a possible interaction between the two. While tagging a user called Tim and a topic *coffee*, users who search for the coffee related posts may find Tim on social media and connect with him. The same way, the users who want to interact with Tim may get into the coffee topic and start following it this way. Zappavigna (2014, 139) remarks that “this post is addressed to Tim using the @ symbol before the name, a construction

which can also function as a reference to the person (e.g. @Tim makes great coffee).” Confirming the ‘@’ symbol tag’s use in relation with tagging specific users.

In the CMC discourse, both hashtags and ‘@’ tags may supply spoken language. Hashtags can create a quick way to address a topic, similar to face-to-face conversation, and ‘@’ tags can serve as to replace addressing someone vocally.

Similarly to hashtags, tags or tagging is used mostly for achieving functional goals, its use in emotionally-motivated context is not expected, and is always context-dependent, as there is no chance of recognizing the author’s intentions from a separate item; yet, they are very often used in social media discourse, therefore it is necessary to confirm whether they are used in an emotionally motivated context or not. Tagging, like hashtags, is a unique feature since it mimics *addressing* used in spoken language and motivations for its use are often highly influenced by the rest of the comment. The possible subcategorizations are following:

- a) Tags that are used to show other people the author’s negative attitude or emotions such as anger, annoyance, frustration, etc. on the topic.
- b) Tags that are used to show other people the author’s negative attitude or emotions such as sadness, powerlessness, or disappointment on the topic.
- c) Tags that are used to show other people the author’s excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc. on the topic.
- d) Tags that are used to show other people the author’s amusement on the topic.
- e) Tags that express the author’s or the tagged user’s possible interest in the topic.
- f) Tags that are emotionally neutral
- g) Other

### **3.4 ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

There are other signs of projection of spoken language to social media discourse, next to emoticons, tags etc. One of them is the use shortening techniques, such as abbreviations and acronyms. There are a lot of word-formation processes that may appear in social media discourse, or CMC in general. However, the very specific area of shortening, abbreviations and acronyms, was chosen for the thesis, as it is generally perceived as a common part of CMC, since it often represents the ability of spoken language to express information quickly; whereas other word-formation processes occur rather rarely.

Katamba (2005, 126) defines acronyms as “words forming a complex expression referring to the name of an organisation, company or a scientific concept may be reduced to their initial letters alone which together represent sounds that form perfectly acceptable syllables and hence can be pronounced as words.” Plag (2002, 163) defines acronyms the same way, however, he points out that they belong to a subcategory of abbreviations. Following examples illustrate use of some commonly used acronyms in CMC:

- a) *LOL*– laughing out loud – expressing the user’s degree of amusement
- b) *IMO* – in my opinion – expressing one’s ideas and attitudes
- c) *YOLO* – you only live once – expressing one’s justification for doing something unusual
- d) *ASAP* – as soon as possible – typical acronym occurring beyond the Internet

Katamba (2005, 127) describes abbreviations as those lexical items that are shortened but not pronounceable as a word. Similarly, Plag claims that “abbreviations are most commonly formed by taking initial letters of multiword sequences to make up a new word. (2002, 161)” Some examples of abbreviations used within CMC are presented below:

- a) *WTF* – what the fuck – expressing the author’s surprise or frustration
- b) *FAQ* – frequently asked questions – usual on forums and social media
- c) *BRB* – (I’ll) be right back – the user announces that he might not be available for a short period of time
- d) *AFK* – away from keyboard – suggesting that the user may not be present in an online communication

As mentioned before, abbreviations and acronyms tend to be used in CMC since it is faster to use them. This way, spoken language has influenced the CMC manners so the synchronous CMC can be as similar to spoken language interaction as possible, in terms of effectiveness and speed. However, due to the high similarity between the two features, they have been joined and further categorized together:

- a) Abbreviations or acronyms that express negative attitude or emotions such as anger, annoyance, frustration, etc.
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be *WTF*, *OMFG*, *FU*
- b) Abbreviations or acronyms that express negative attitude or emotions such as sadness, powerlessness, or disappointment
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be *WTH*, *OMG*, *RIP*

- c) Abbreviations or acronyms that express excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be *LOL, GR8, NI*
- d) Abbreviations or acronyms that express amusement
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be *LOL, ROFL, LMAO*
- e) Abbreviations or acronyms that are emotionally neutral
  - Typical examples of this sub-category can be *NASA, USA, PR*
- f) Other

Abbreviations and acronyms stand somewhere between emojis and emoticons on one side and hashtags and tags on the other, as this feature can both express emotions regardless the context, and work as a functional tool for shortening. This is why it is expected that all kinds of abbreviations might appear in social media discourse, therefore even the ‘neutral’ category has to be included.

### 3.5 EXCESSIVE CAPITALIZATION

The last described domains of language informality often used in social media discourse are excessive use of capital letters and excessive use of punctuation. In English, capital letters are usually used when writing names of people, places and words relating to them; they are also used at the beginning of a sentence, in abbreviations, and in the titles of books, films, organizations etc. (Oxford Dictionaries 2018). However, in CMC people often tend to misuse capitalization. The main reason is obvious, the users want to emphasize their messages and posts, therefore they choose to capitalize words that should not be capitalized creating mistakes in their writings. As Schocker (2009) remarks, this method of emphasis can be understood as ‘online screaming’ or ‘yelling’. That might create readers’ confusion since the readers usually count on the correct use of the rules of capitalization, and also, a capitalized message is harder to read for most people, as they are used to the language system that is based on using both capitalized and lower case letters. The authors usually tend to emphasize messages this way when they feel frustrated or just simply want to point out an important item in their message:

- a) I told you NOT TO GO THERE, YOU IDIOT.
- b) I was happy that I could finish THE best book ever!

Categorizing excessive capitalization is similar to emoticons and emojis, as both of these categories are expected to strongly express emotions:

- a) Excessive capitalization that expresses negative attitude or emotions such as anger, annoyance, frustration, etc.
  - As in: ‘WHY DID YOU DO THAT?!’
- b) Excessive capitalization that expresses negative attitude or emotions such as sadness, powerlessness, or disappointment
  - As in: ‘I REALLY loved my mom...’
- c) Excessive capitalization that expresses excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.
  - As in: ‘Man, you were GREAT!!’
- d) Excessive capitalization that expresses amusement
  - As in: ‘How did YOU manage to do that?:D:D’
- e) Excessive capitalization that are emotionally neutral
  - As in: ‘The PEOPLE of this country have been working hard...’
- f) Other

This sub-categorization is very context dependent, as it might not be clear just from the capitalized words or letters what the author wants to express; therefore, it is crucial to focus on the rest of the text to interpret the correct context and meaning to determine whether the text is emotionally motivated or not.

### 3.6 EXCESSIVE PUNCTUATION

As for excessive punctuation, the reasons for its usage are quite similar; emphasizing a message in order to gain the reader's attention, often emotionally motivated. Similarly to excessive capitalization, such improper punctuation may make it more difficult for the reader to understand the text. Huddleston, Nunberg and Briscoe (2002) point out that

It is possible for question and exclamation marks to be iterated for emphatic effect, and for an exclamation mark to follow a question mark:

[i] Who, I wonder, is going to volunteer for the late shift??

[ii] Guess what -- we've sold the house at last!!

[iii] Did you see his face when she mentioned the doctor?!

This again reflects the fact that the main function of these two indicators is to indicate status: there is no comparable use of the terminal full stop, a pure boundary marker. In [iii] the question mark signals that the sentence is a question, while the exclamation mark conveys that there was something remarkable about the situation -- presumably his face showed strong emotion of one kind or another. Examples like those [...] tend to be disfavoured by the manuals; [...] they are restricted to informal style.

This concept puts a blurred boundary between tolerable and intolerable punctuation overuse. To clarify the difference between excessive and non-excessive punctuation a general rule is applied to the classification of this category; usually, occurrence of more than two symbols of a punctuation mark is considered as excessive use of punctuation, along with other unusual and improper cases of punctuation. The classification is following:

- a) Excessive punctuation that expresses negative attitude or emotions such as anger, annoyance, frustration, etc.
  - As in: 'I hate you!!!!'
- b) Excessive punctuation that expresses negative attitude or emotions such as sadness, powerlessness, or disappointment
  - As in: 'Was it really necessary?!?'
- c) Excessive punctuation that expresses excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.
  - As in: 'Cool, bro, that's great!!!!'

- d) Excessive punctuation that expresses amusement
  - As in: 'lol!!!'
- e) Other

Despite significant similarities between excessive punctuation and capitalization, the subcategory of emotionally neutral items has not been included, as excessive punctuation is expected to be emotionally motivated most of the time. As seen in the examples, some non-standard features can mix, in order to express certain emotions, therefore, context is often important for recognizing the motivations of the author; however, it is not essential.

## **4 ANALYSIS**

As it was mentioned in the previous part of the thesis, social media networking, as a part of CMC, differs from regular written discourse; especially in terms of textual formality, which is highly influenced by spoken discourse. Social media discourse is somewhere in between the two, adopting the written form of language, and informality, typical for spoken language.

The aim of the analysis is to determine what non-standard lexical features occur in social media discourse, and to examine the effects of language informality and spoken language on it. Furthermore, the frequency of the usage of those is analyzed, as well as the motivations of the writers. There are several categories of different lexical items and different motivations, which results in one part of the analysis focusing on the mere occurrence of the items and the other focusing on the authors' reasons for using them. It is necessary to point out the importance of context and interpretation while analyzing the occurrences and determining the authors' reasons and emotional motivations. The analysis is divided for each social media site separately to see if the use of non-standard lexical items differs on each website, as well as it is dealt with as a whole to see the overall impact on social media.

### **4.1 THE CORPUS**

The corpus has been compiled from 180 comments from different social networking sites. To maintain objectivity, the comments were taken evenly from the three sites: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. The reason why these three sites have been chosen is that each of them is unique, and the most popular in their area of social networking, thus all of them deserve an opportunity to be examined, for the discourse may slightly differ on each of the sites. As mentioned in the beginning of the thesis, all the sites offer several means of communication. To avoid an extremely informal environment, the idea of including Facebook's Messenger or Instagram's Direct, both working as synchronous real-time chatting services, has been abandoned. The reason for that is that private messaging via these chatting services is, most of the time, highly informal, which would lead to distortion in research. For a similar reason, standard posts from all sites have been excluded; the writers of standard posts usually try to keep the text formal. That, however, depends on the area in which the writer functions. For those reasons, comment sections have been selected as sufficient, since they reflect users' immediate thoughts and balanced level of textual formality.

Three posts per each site have been selected as sources of the comments used in the corpus. For all the sites, the pages or accounts from which the posts had been selected, have been chosen via *statista.com*. The most popular page for each site has been selected in order to reach high diversity among the users securing balanced formality degree in the selected discourse. For Facebook, it was the Facebook page that had the most fans; for Instagram, the Instagram profile was the one with the most followers; for Twitter, it was Katy Perry's account that had the most followers. To preserve diversity among users, not only the most popular pages or accounts have been selected, but some of the news sources as well. These sources were randomly chosen from a pool of highly subscribed news pages of the United States of America. For Facebook, The New York Times page has been chosen; for Instagram, BBC News; for Twitter, CNN. The USA was chosen as the target country for the news sources, for it is the largest English-speaking country, therefore, it is a reliable source from the linguistic point of view. To preserve the originally unwanted concept of one post being taken from a page of its own site, the third post for Twitter has been selected from the Twitter account, despite its relatively low number of followers.

The posts themselves, as well as the ultimate comments, have been selected randomly. Nevertheless, the sites' filtering options need to be taken into consideration, since the sites tend to filter unwanted content, therefore some comments may have not been visible, hence selected as a part of the corpus. The fact that the chosen posts were written in the period from March 16, 2018 to June 2, 2018 does not have any particular purpose, the times and dates have been chosen randomly as well.

There was an issue to solve when the target pages or accounts were being chosen. Specifically, Twitter's most followed account was not Twitter, as it was common with Facebook and Instagram. It was a celebrity account, Katy Perry's. There may have been a highly specific user community that could result in a bias. Originally, the account was not to be included in the analysis. However, the content of some, for example, Instagram's posts was rather similar, therefore Katy Perry's account was ultimately included.

## **4.2 CATEGORIZATION**

Several types of non-standard lexical items have been analyzed: emoticons, emojis, hashtags, tags, abbreviations, acronyms, excessive punctuation, and excessive capitalization. There are a lot of other features that may indicate a degree of formality, such as vocabulary, contracted forms, ellipsis, etc.; however, those mentioned in the beginning of this subchapter, as they are

typical especially for CMC, have been selected as sufficient. All of them, to some extent, reflect spoken language features, such as emotions, addressing other people, pace, etc. All of the mentioned items have been searched for in all of the 180 comments and have been further categorized and analyzed.

*Emoticons and emojis* have been merged in the process of categorizing, since they have the exact same function. Additionally, Facebook and other platforms usually convert emoticons into their own emojis, therefore occurrence of typical emoticons is not very frequent. *Abbreviations and acronyms* have been merged as well, for both may be classified as abbreviations, as Plag (2002, 163) puts it; moreover, the differences between the two are not relevant in social media discourse. Hashtags, tags, excessive punctuation, and excessive capitalization remain in their own categories. As a result, six primary categories were created.

It is necessary to highlight the importance of context during further categorization of the items. Identical features may have had different interpretations in different comments. Therefore, the analysis may seem subjective, however, it has been attempted to maintain as much objectivity as possible; despite that, some readers may reach slightly different interpretations. In addition, with some comments it was impossible to determine the writers' motivations since sarcasm may have been used or the context was not sufficient. As mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis, some features may require context more often than others to allow the reader to determine their meaning. To put it another way, context and interpretation were crucial while conducting this analysis.

### **4.3 RESULTS**

In all 180 comments, 231 occurrences have been found. The occurrences have been found in only 126 comments (70 %), leaving the remaining 54 comments (30 %) without any of the non-standard lexical items. The count of such 'unmarked' comments is 14 for Facebook (7.78 %), 17 for Instagram (9.44 %) and 23 for Twitter (12.78 %). The amount of unmarked comments is similar for Facebook and Instagram, however, Twitter has much higher rate of unmarked comments. This may be caused by the 140-character limitation of the length of the Twitter's comment option; the users want to be as precise as possible and may see using non-standard items as vague, therefore want to use the 140 characters for as many accurate statements as possible.

This is also supported by the fact that from the 231 occurrences, 89 (38.53 %) have been found on Facebook, 76 (32.9 %) on Instagram, and only 66 (28.57 %) on Twitter. This proves the relatively low use of non-standard lexical items on Twitter. Facebook's high number of occurrences can be explained by the length of the comments. While Instagram is solely a mobile application, Facebook is often used via computers. Using a computer is a more comfortable way of writing any kind of text than using a mobile phone, therefore, people are usually willing to put more time into writing a message on Facebook via a computer, resulting in longer messages than the messages on Instagram, which are usually written via a mobile device. With increasing length of the text, the probability of occurrence of a non-standard lexical item increases as well. That is why Facebook has notably more occurrences than Instagram.

#### 4.3.1 EMOTICONS AND EMOJIS

The emoticons and emojis category has been divided into several sub-categories, see chapter three in the theoretical part. The sub-category 'other' includes those items that were hardly categorizable or functioning to replace words, as in this example:

a) That is 😞 that 🐕 only has one eye 😞😞😞😞

It is clear that the meaning of the sentence is: "That is *sad* that *the dog* only has one eye" and the emojis are used to replace the missing words. It is necessary to point out that in some comments, the emojis were merged into a single occurrence. It was done so, for they represented the same category and were repeatedly used one after another. For example:

a) @taylorbreaker lmao yasssss ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

The repeating heart emoji was considered as one occurrence, since the repetition does not change the emotional motivation of the user.

**Table 1** – Emoticons and emojis overall

Category	Occurrence Count
Negative - anger etc.	6 (9.52 %)
Negative - sadness etc.	7 (11.11 %)
Positive - excitement etc.	39 (61.9 %)
Amusement	5 (7.94 %)
Other	6 (9.52 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

As seen in the table, 63 (27.27 %) of all the 231 occurrences were emojis or emoticons. The highest occurrence of positive emojis and emoticons suggests that users tend to use emoticons and emojis while expressing positive attitudes. This might be given by the accuracy of several positively-oriented symbols, such as hearts, smiling faces, etc.; each oriented in a slightly different way of positivity. Since Facebook tries to prevent negativity spreading through the site, most of the emojis Facebook offer are positively oriented, therefore users have a solid range of emojis to pick from. These instances may serve as typical examples of such occurrences:

- a) Great work  #facebook can you please make 'Hug' reaction on posts, tnx!
- b) Love this! You are a very special woman! Your parents must be so proud!! 
- c) Amazing.  So good to know there are good hearted people out there
- d)          
- e) Beautiful couple despite the hate they're receiving  
- f) Love you @katyperry 

It is clear, that a relatively widely used emoji expressing positive attitudes is the heart symbol, as in examples *a*, *b*, *e*, *f*, or the Heart Eyes Emoji, as in examples *c* and *d*. These, along with several hand-gesture-type emojis, belong among the most used ones in positively oriented context. The choice of such emojis is expectable as heart is generally perceived as a symbol of love and positivity. The Thumbs Up Sign Emoji is not always used to express positive attitudes, but is often used as a sarcastic symbol of affirmation; as seen in the example *d*, this is not the case, as the Thumbs Up Sign Emoji is accompanied with a lot of Heart Eyes Emojis signaling

the fact that it was not used to express sarcasm; also, the character of the parental post helps with determining whether such use of the emoji is sarcastic or not.

The number of occurrences in other categories was rather similar, which is a result of the popularity of positive emojis and emoticons. What is interesting, however, is the relatively low number of items expressing amusement, as it is a positively oriented category as well. That may be given by the choice of the original posts, that were, most of the time, rather serious to preserve an appropriate degree of formality.

**Table 2** – Emoticons and emojis separately

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>		
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Negative - anger etc.	3	2	1
Negative - sadness etc.	2	3	2
Positive - excitement etc.	6	20	13
Amusement	2	1	2
Other	1	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>19</b>

14 (22.22 %) of all the 63 emojis and emoticons were used on Facebook, 30 (47.62 %) on Instagram, and 19 (30.16 %) on Twitter. The Instagram's high occurrence can be interpreted as a result of Instagram being a mobile app, where emojis are usually easier and faster to use than other language means. There may not be an explanation for why the occurrence of emojis is higher on Twitter rather than on Facebook; the numbers are relatively similar, hence a higher number of comments in the corpus might equal the two websites in terms of emoji and emoticon use. Nevertheless, Instagram would still remain at the highest position for the mentioned reasons.

### 4.3.2 ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Table 3 – Abbreviations and acronyms overall

Category	Occurrence Count
Negative - anger etc.	2 (4.76 %)
Negative - sadness etc.	6 (14.29 %)
Positive - excitement etc.	6 (14.29 %)
Amusement	2 (4.76 %)
Other	1 (2.38 %)
Neutral	25 (59.52 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>

42 (18.18 %) of the 231 occurrences were abbreviations and acronyms. The majority of them, 25 (59.52 %) occurrences, were not emotionally motivated, thus, the authors used them simply to substitute words, that either they considered too long or are generally used in their abbreviated form. The number of abbreviated forms that were influenced by negative context and the number of those influenced by positive context is equal and very low. As a result, it can be said that abbreviations and acronyms are used in emotionally motivated context only rarely.

- a) See **u** in two weeks babe
- b) I'm happy **CNN** I worked for my salary.
- c) ALL **UI** improvements appreciated. :)
- d) What a wonderful young woman to think of others that are less fortunate **&** bring them a night they'll always remember!

These examples show the number of ways in which neutral abbreviations could be used. The abbreviation *u* can be considered as fixed as it has been functioning to shorten the word *you*, based on its phonological similarity, since the beginning of the Internet. This abbreviation was used several times in the corpus, similarly as other fixed abbreviations like *plz* (or *pls*). That is why these abbreviations are not considered as emotionally motivated, as they are simply used to write a comment faster. *CNN* or *UI* are commonly known abbreviations that are ordinary outside the CMC. *CNN* was used several times in the corpus; however, that was due to the context, which was related to CNN. Otherwise, similar abbreviations or acronyms are mostly used in *their* specific areas, that is CNN, BBC, etc. in news-related posts, and UI, UX, etc. in

computer-related posts; therefore, their occurrence cannot be emotionally motivated. The use of the & symbol is also considered as neutral due to the fact that it only substitutes the word *and*, similarly as in the case of *u* and *you*. However, *u* in the following example is rather emotionally (positively) motivated:

- a) I love **u** mom so much ❤️ thank **u** for everything

It was put in the ‘positive’ category as it is clear, from the context, that the *u* was written under the influence of positive emotions, therefore the author did not want to use *you* as it might seem prepared and thought through. Since *u* is used, there is an impression of emotions involved, as the writer wanted to write it as fast as possible and did not want to think about it. Also, the vocabulary, e.g. ‘love’ and emoticons used suggest that the context is positively oriented, therefore the abbreviations are positively oriented as well. On the other hand, in the following example we can see how an abbreviation was used in the negatively oriented context:

- a) how about fixing the verification request forms first! **TIA**

*TIA* meaning ‘thanks in advance’ suggests the author’s dissatisfaction over a problem mentioned in his comment. Here, we can see a typical example of high context-dependency and interpretation, as the only guide may be the ‘how about’ phrase, which appear to be relatively rude.

**Table 4** – Abbreviations and acronyms separately

Category	Occurrence Count		
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Negative - anger etc.	1	0	1
Negative - sadness etc.	5 (25 %)	1	0
Positive - excitement etc.	1	2	3
Amusement	2	0	0
Other	0	1	0
Neutral	11 (55 %)	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>

20 (47.62 %) of all the 42 abbreviations were used on Facebook, 12 (28.57 %) on Instagram, and 10 (23.81 %) on Twitter. The reason for their extensive use on Facebook may be identical with why Facebook has the most occurrences in general. It is interesting that Instagram and

Twitter have so similar results, as with Twitter's limited comment length, higher occurrence of shortened forms would be expected. The reason why Instagram has such low number of occurrences might be that its users tend to write short comments, since it is a mobile app, thus, there is no room to shorten anything. It is also unusual that, on Facebook, abbreviations and acronyms are often used (25 %) in negatively motivated contexts expressing sadness or disappointment. The number of neutral items is still notably higher (55 %), however, compared to the other sites, expressing such emotions via Facebook is significantly more frequent. This might be given by Facebook's recent Cambridge Analytica scandal, as some of the posts have been taken from Facebook's fan page and some users might have complained about the scandal and topics related to it.

### 4.3.3 HASHTAGS

The hashtag category originally used the categorization described in the theoretical part, however all negative categories and the amusement category were abandoned, since no occurrence fitting into these categories had been found, which was rather surprising. Despite that, there is an extra sub-category expressing the writer's support of a certain topic or trend, usually following the message as a separate, but related, unit. This subcategory has usually no or minor emotional motivation. A typical example could be:

- a) Americans are much happier with their wages now than when the fraud Obama was in office. #MAGA

The #MAGA hashtag stands for 'Make America Great Again', a campaign slogan often used by Donald Trump during the United States presidential election, 2016. Such use of the hashtag suggests the author's support for Donald Trump and his political ideology.

Hashtags themselves do not express users' attitudes, however, put in context they can fulfill the same purpose as, for instance, emoticons. This is why this category has the unique 'support' sub-category which is not applicable on any other analyzed feature. The subcategory 'other' represents the occurrences where the authors' substituted words with hashtags with no apparent emotional motivation. For example, in:

- a) You #ShadowBanned me again. Please stop #censorship

Both hashtags could be easily substituted by regular words, thus their use here is solely functional. Other examples in this subcategory included sarcasm or unclear occurrences. This category includes only three specific categories.

**Table 5 – Hashtags overall**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>
Positive - excitement etc.	4 (28.57 %)
Other	6 (42.86 %)
Support	4 (28.57 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

It is apparent that hashtags are used under the influence of emotions only occasionally (28.57 %), as mentioned before, it is interesting that no occurrences of negative emotions have been found. These results may indicate what was expected at the beginning of the analysis, that is, users tend to use hashtags mostly for functional purposes; to support a person, concept, idea etc., or to allow other users to find the ‘hashtagged’ post. Here are some clear examples of this sub-category:

- a) Great work ❤️ **#facebook** can you please make 'Hug' reaction on posts, tnx!
- b) Americans are much happier with their wages now than when the fraud Obama was in office. **#MAGA**

Both show a supportive attitude to a certain topic; the example *a* shows praise for Facebook itself, and the example *b* expresses support for America in general. To distinct the occurrences of support and those of positivity, an example is given:

- a) **#lovely #cute**

In this instance, the whole comment is created by only two hashtags and nothing more. Neither of them, however, expresses support to a certain topic; they only express the author’s positive emotions related to the parental post. Also, this example is highly context-dependent, for there is nothing else in the comment, therefore knowing the content of the parental post is crucial for interpretation of this comment’s meaning, since it could be perceived as sarcasm if the parental post was not taken into consideration.

**Table 6 – Hashtags separately**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>		
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Positive - excitement etc.	0	2	2
Amusement	1	0	5
Other	1	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>

As expected, a very low number of hashtags were used on Facebook (14.29 %). This may be caused by their relative unpopularity on the website. Nevertheless, much higher occurrence of hashtags on Instagram was expected, as their popularity is comparable to Twitter, where people use them very often (71.43 %). This might be caused by the fact that users like to add hashtags mostly in their posts, both videos and photos, to increase their reach, instead of using hashtags as a communication device in comment sections.

#### **4.3.4 TAGS**

As no occurrences of tags motivated by sadness, disappointment and other similar negative emotions, had been found, these sub-categories were abandoned during the process.

**Table 7 – Tags overall**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>
Negative - anger etc.	8 (26.67 %)
Positive - excitement etc.	5 (16.67 %)
Amusement	3 (10 %)
Interest	8 (26.67 %)
Neutral	5 (16.67 %)
Other	1 (3.33 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

It is obvious that tags, similarly as hashtags, were often used simply for functional reasons, that is addressing other users, for the authors found the post interesting for them or the tagged users

(26.67 %), or addressing them to increase the chance of the addressed ones noticing the message, with no emotional background of the message (16.67 %), as in the following example:

- a) Hello *@Facebook*, Can you recover our conversation for me? Because our conversation was I unintentionally deleted because my phone got lagged. Please recover our conversation as soon as possible. Thank you!

The user addresses Facebook to increase his or her chances of Facebook employees noticing him or her. There was a single occurrence in the ‘other’ category which was uncategorizable:

- a) I cannot follow anyone? It doesn't show who I follow, my timeline doesn't refresh. What gives *@Twitter*, I have verified my email to authenticate the account & login verification that it is me

As the comment is rather chaotically structured, it is possible that the tag was an error made by the user.

As seen in the table, quite a large number of tags were emotionally motivated 8 (26.67 %) negatively, 5 (16.67 %) positively, and 3 (10 %) expressing amusement. That makes it slightly more emotionally marked tags than those that are unmarked, which is unusual, as the feature serves primarily for functional purposes. The following examples show negatively motivated tags:

- a) Still waiting for an EDIT button or spellcheck/spellchange button. You met all the needs no one has asked for. But ignored the one request that universal **@jack @Twitter**
- b) **@CameronYardeJnr** And still they don't introduce an edit button! 

It is clear that such cases are completely context-dependent, as there is no way for them to express any emotion on their own. Therefore, it is necessary to search for other emotionally marked signs, such as capitalization and the choice of vocabulary in the example *a*, or the emojis and the choice of vocabulary in the example *b*.

**Table 8** – Tags separately

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>		
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Negative - anger etc.	1	4	3
Positive - excitement etc.	0	4	1
Amusement	3	0	0
Interest	3	3	2
Neutral	2	3	0
Other	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>

The table shows that Instagram users tag other people significantly more often than the users of other social media. More specifically, they have tagged people fourteen times (46.67 %), as opposed to Facebook and Twitter that reach almost the same number, 9 (30 %) for Facebook and 7 (23.33 %) for Twitter, combined. After a detailed examination, it is clear that this phenomenon is caused by the relatively high use of emotionally motivated tagging on Instagram (8 of the 30 occurrences), which is rather moderate on Facebook, where people tend to tag other users as a sign of amusement (3 of the 30 occurrences), and on Twitter, where people usually tag to express their negative attitudes (3 of the 30 occurrences). Otherwise, the results of this category are relatively balanced and expected.

#### **4.3.5 EXCESSIVE PUNCTUATION**

The excessive punctuation category includes the same subcategories as emoticons and emojis, except the ‘amusement’ category, for which no occurrences have been found; additionally, the ‘other’ category includes also typos, sarcasm, and nonsensical text division, which could not appear in previous categories.

**Table 9** – Excessive punctuation overall

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>
Negative - anger etc.	14 (28.57 %)
Negative - sadness etc.	2 (4.08 %)
Positive - excitement etc.	8 (16.33 %)
Other	25 (51.02 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>

In more than half of the occurrences, people excessively used punctuation either for no apparent reason, as an ending of a message or for separating parts of the message, full stops were used this way, most of the time; see below:

a) [...] Wow, joyfull tears,Great story!...

The full stops following the exclamatory mark at the end of the sentence do not mark the sentence by any emotional motivations and does not make much sense.

a) Congratulations\_ Prince Harry \_\_\_ and Meghan\_\_\_ Prince Harry I will do what you ask\_\_ And stop worrying \_\_

In this example, highly nonsensical use of the underscore symbol is used to separate certain parts of the message. The reasons for doing so, however, remain unclear. In some other cases, people would make a mistake using, for instance, too many single quote symbols, etc.; or used excessive punctuation to mock certain topics, as seen here:

a) This can only be stopped by banning all Romanians from entering the US!!!1!!!  
#MAGA

This comment is obviously highly satirical, hence the true emotions behind the excessive use of an exclamatory mark stay hidden, and it is reasonable to assume that the author was not influenced by any emotions.

As expected, in terms of emotional motivations, most of the occurrences were motivated by anger, frustration etc. (28.57 %), whereas positive emotions were expressed this way only in 16.33 % of the cases. This can be simply explained by users' needs to render their frustration via exclamatory marks. As indicated in the theoretical part of the thesis, two exclamatory marks

are an acceptable method of amplifying the message, therefore, instances with only two exclamatory marks were excluded from the analysis. However, the use of three or more exclamatory marks or even question marks suggests that people want to appear ‘loud’ and be taken seriously, as in:

Would be nice if you could fix the feed so I can see more than a handful of posts and that they aren't three days old!!!!

The user is putting a lot of emphasis to his or her message by using more than appropriate exclamatory marks. Most of these anger-motivated occurrences are structured almost identically with this one, since it is one of the simplest methods, as pressing the button does not require an extensive amount of effort. See:

- a) All I want to do is delete my account due to privacy violation and it wont let me!!!!  
HELP
- b) I need help from Facebook and I can't seem to find anyone to help me!!!!
- c) [...] WHAT has happened to my acct??????

The writers included in the corpus used either several exclamation or question marks in a row. Such occurrences tend to repeat; however, the number of the marks is not strictly given; usually, it was three to five marks; that varied from user to user.

Despite the positive emotions channeled via excessive punctuation being rather less frequent in contrast with the negative ones, the positively motivated occurrences still represent a significant part of the communication in the comments. However, their occurrence was expected to be slightly higher and closer to the ‘negative’ occurrences.

**Table 10** – Excessive punctuation separately

Category	Occurrence Count		
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Negative - anger etc.	10	0	4
Negative - sadness etc.	2	0	0
Positive - excitement etc.	6	0	2
Other	8	14	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>

Facebook with its 26 (53.06 %) occurrences ranks at the top position far above Instagram with 14 (28.57 %) or Twitter with 9 (18.37 %). The reason why people tend to excessively use punctuation on Facebook is similar to previous findings. Facebook was originally used via non-

mobile devices, which usually require keyboards to fully function; that provides its users with space to write relatively long comments and does not limit them in any way. It is, also, a simple method, since it requires only pressing keys. That might be why Facebook has so many more occurrences than the other sites. Instagram, as a mobile app, is quite limiting in terms of writing speed, therefore, it is logical that it has fewer occurrences than Facebook. Also, Twitter’s 140-character limitations appears as a logical reason for it having so few occurrences, as its users simply do not have the space to overuse punctuation.

The most surprising fact is that on Instagram, no emotionally motivated occurrences were found, hence most of the occurrences functioned as signals for ending a comment or separating it into several parts.

#### 4.3.6 EXCESSIVE CAPITALIZATION

The excessive capitalization category includes the exact same categories as emoticons and emojis, but its ‘other’ subcategory involves possible typos, mistakes etc., that could not appear in the mentioned category.

**Table 11** – Excessive capitalization overall

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>
Negative - anger etc.	16 (48.49 %)
Negative - sadness etc.	3 (9.09 %)
Positive - excitement etc.	9 (27.27 %)
Amusement	1 (3.03 %)
Other	4 (12.12 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>

Excessive capitalization, similarly as excessive punctuation, has been frequently used (48.49 %) in order to express negative attitudes; which was expected as capitalizing is as simple as overusing punctuation. However, relatively high occurrence of positively oriented capitalization (27.27 %) is surprising, as it was expected to be slightly lower. Despite the expectations, the results seem logical, since users want to express both positivity and negativity in a way that makes the comments visible, *loud*, grand. Other phenomena such as sadness,

disappointment etc. were expected to be rather low but not completely, therefore, these results match as well.

What is very different, from otherwise similar punctuation category, is the ‘other’ subcategory, which consists of a lot fewer occurrences of nonsensical, error-based, etc. examples. That, however, makes sense, as users may realize the difficulty in reading overcapitalized messages, as oppose to reading ‘overpunctuated’ messages, which are at least structured and may be easier to follow, in some cases. Thus, they use excessive capitalization almost solely to express emotions. To illustrate the difference between positively and negatively motivated occurrences, a few examples were given:

- a) Won't you **PLEASE** stop automatically switching us to the page that shows everyone we have blocked when we block someone ??? I lose my place on my timeline every time. There's absolutely **NO NEED** to switch us to the blocked page !!! Thank you !!!
- b) Why is it when I check **MOST RECENT** it never shows **MOST RECENT**?
- c) 🙄 EXCUSE ME Facebook ITS WEDNESDAY 📅 MAY 30,2018!!! WHY IS MY ENTIRE TIMELINE SHOWING POST FROM MONDAY MAY 28. 2018???? YOU HAVE PPL THINKING IM STALKING THEM LIKE THEIR POST FROM MONDAY 😬
- d) **AWESOME!** Watched **TWICE**.
- e) YOUR POSITIVE WAY IS SO REWARDING !
- f) IT IS AN AMAZING STORY THANKS FOR SHARING

The examples *a* and *b* show the use of capitalization in order to emphasize the words similarly to the spoken language. Some degree of frustration is clear from the context in both cases, therefore, it confirms the authors’ intention to overuse capitalization in order to express negative emotions. The example *c* is also negatively motivated, as the whole comment is capitalized (it is also considered as a single occurrence), which suggests that the author might have been really angry and wanted the text to evoke yelling. In the examples *d*, *e*, and *f*, the contexts help to determine the positive motivations involved in these comments. However, the appearance is the same as with those negatively motivated, therefore, the parental posts and vocabulary are crucial for interpreting their correct meaning.

**Table 12** – Excessive capitalization separately

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>		
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Negative - anger etc.	9	1	6
Negative - sadness etc.	2	0	1
Positive - excitement etc.	4	2	3
Amusement	1	0	0
Other	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>

The occurrence of excessive capitalization is again the highest on Facebook with 18 (54.55 %) instances of overcapitalization, following with Twitter with 11 (33.33 %) and Instagram with 4 (12.12 %). Facebook has the highest occurrence of capitalization for the same reasons as in the ‘excessive punctuation’ category (see above), as these two categories are similar in many ways. However, it is interesting to see that so few occurrences were found on Instagram; the reasons for that may be hidden in the mobile nature of the application, as it was with previous categories. However, switching to capital letters is quite simple even on mobile devices, therefore it remains unclear why there is such low occurrence of excessive capitalization on Instagram. Twitter’s mediocre results may stem from the message length limitations, which inhibits its chances to reach Facebook. Nevertheless, the number of occurrences here is still much higher than on Instagram, for Twitter is widely used on both mobile and non-mobile devices.

#### **4.3.7 COMPARISON OF OCCURRENCES**

For each category and their subcategories have been interpreted, it is now appropriate to compare the parental categories in general.

**Table 13** – Non-standard lexical features

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>			
	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Total</b>
Emojis and emoticons	14	30	19	<b>63</b>
Hashtags	2	2	10	<b>14</b>
Tags	9	14	7	<b>30</b>
Abbreviations and acronyms	20	12	10	<b>42</b>
Excessive punctuation	26	14	9	<b>49</b>
Excessive capitalization	18	4	11	<b>33</b>

As expected, emojis and emoticons have covered the largest number of occurrences in the social media discourse; with its 63 of 231 (27.28 %) instances. Also, a relatively high amount of overused punctuation has been discovered, with its 49 (21.21 %) occurrences, which is also in accordance with the original expectations. However, similar number of overused capitalization was expected while conducting the analysis, as the motivations for their use are comparable to the ‘excessive punctuation’ category. The occurrence of abbreviations and acronyms is also relatively high, with its 42 (18.18 %). Nonetheless, as seen from the results of this particular category, most of the occurrences were not emotionally motivated. What is surprising is the comparable number of occurrences of tags and those of excessive capitalization; it was expected that tagging other people under the influence of emotions would be a lot less frequent than overcapitalization. Additionally, more than 14 (6.06 %) occurrences of hashtags was expected to be found, however, as mentioned in the hashtag chapter, this result may be caused by choosing to analyze comments sections rather than posts themselves, especially on Instagram.

#### **4.3.8 EMOTIONAL MOTIVATION CLASSIFICATION**

As all non-standard lexical features have been categorized in relation to lexical classes, it is appropriate to classify them also in relation to the users’ motivations for using them. Taken from the perspective focusing on the emotional motivations of the users, the categorization of the occurrences is following:

Lexical features expressing:

- Negative attitudes or emotions such as anger, annoyance, frustration
- Negative attitudes or emotions such as sadness, powerlessness, disappointment

- Positive attitudes or emotions such as excitement, support, respect, gratitude
- Amusement
- Neutral expressions (without emotional motivation)
- Topic support (described in previous chapters)
- Interest
- Other (uncategorizable items, mistakes, nonsensical items, and other items that occurred only rarely and did not fit into regular categories)

**Table 14** – Motivations overall

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>
Negative - anger, etc.	46 (19.91 %)
Negative - sadness, etc.	18 (7.79 %)
Positive - excitement, etc.	71 (30.74 %)
Amusement	11 (4.76 %)
Support	4 (1.73 %)
Neutral	30 (12.99 %)
Interest	8 (3.46 %)
Other	43 (18.61 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>

As seen in the table, users' positive motivations influence most (30.74 %) of the non-standard lexical features used in the social media discourse, which is an expected result; however, much higher occurrence of the 'negative – anger, etc.' category was expected as people tend to be rather negative in online discussions. Despite that, with 46 (19.91 %), the presence of negativity in social media communication is still relatively high. Also, only 11 (4.76 %) instances of 'amusement' items were found in the comments, which is drastically low as oppose to the original expectations; the number of occurrences was estimated to be similar to the 'positive' category. This may be caused, by choosing to analyze comments over personal direct messaging, which might include significantly more 'amusement' non-standard lexical features. The low number of instances found within the 'support' and 'interest' categories is understandable, as these categories are unique only for specific social media platforms. The occurrence of emotionally neutral non-standard items is balanced, with its 30 (12.99 %) instances, although, around five more percent was expected to occur in this category. This might

be due to the decision to place some occurrences into the ‘other’ category, as it was slightly more fitting; however, in some cases, the differences between the two were minimal.

**Table 15** – Motivations separately

<b>Category</b>	<b>Occurrence Count</b>		
	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>Twitter</b>
Negative - anger, etc.	24	7	15
Negative - sadness, etc.	11	4	3
Positive - excitement, etc.	17	30	24
Amusement	8	1	2
Support	1	0	3
Neutral	13	11	6
Interest	3	3	2
Other	12	20	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>66</b>

From general perspective, most negatively motivated elements occurred on Facebook, followed by Twitter, leaving Instagram far behind with only a few occurrences of negatively motivated lexical features. This might be caused by more serious conception of Facebook and Twitter; more neutral and negative posts are shared on these sites; several news articles may serve as an example of rather negatively charged environment. Instagram users tend to share the most widely acceptable content as to gain followers, that results in less serious tone of the platform, which may be the cause why such a high number of negative occurrences have been found on the other two platforms. What differs Twitter from Facebook, however, is that Facebook actually has the lowest number of positive items, as well as it is the only social media that has a higher number of negatively motivated features than those positively motivated.

Another unusual fact is that 30 of 76 Instagram’s occurrences are positively motivated; with 20 uncategorized items, this makes Instagram incomparably highly positive environment, in contrast with the other two sites. However, the degree of amusement expressed by its users is the lowest with only one item found on the site, which is unusual. Additionally, despite the high occurrence of negatively motivated items on Facebook, the occurrence of the items expressing amusement is the highest, and it is significantly higher than on any other site with its 8 occurrences; there were 11 occurrences of amusement on all platforms in total.

#### 4.4 SUMMARY

The analysis showed that non-standard lexical features were not present in all comments, in fact, they appeared in only 70 % of the comments; the remaining 30 % on unmarked comments were spread across the three platforms with Twitter having the least number of marked comments and Facebook with the highest. However, 231 occurrences being found in the remaining 126 comments suggests high density of use of non-standard lexical items anyway. The highest number of occurrences have been found on Facebook and the lowest on Twitter.

The results show, that emojis and emoticons were the most used non-standard lexical features, and most of them served to express positive emotions of the users, however, significant use of the positive emojis and emoticons was found rather on Instagram and Twitter than on Facebook. Abbreviations and acronyms turned out to be used in emotional motivated context only rarely proving their use mostly for neutral, functional purposes. The analysis displayed that hashtags too are used mostly for its functional purposes, not for expressing emotional motivations. The results suggest that if hashtags were emotionally motivated, it was only in positive context. Similarly, tagging was used to express interest in a topic, to address other users, however, in contrast with hashtags, similar number of emotionally motivated cases were found; this makes tagging relatively universal in its use. Excessive use of punctuation occurred most of the time in nonsensical situations, often to end or separate a comment with full stops. However, high occurrence of negatively marked punctuation was found as it was expected too. It is interesting that in the case of Instagram, punctuation was overused only in the nonsensical items, whereas Facebook and Twitter included emotionally motivated use of excessive punctuation relatively widely. Similarly, excessive capitalization is used to express negative emotions in almost half of the cases, however almost never on Instagram.

In general, the most used non-standard language means were emoticons and emojis, excessive punctuation and abbreviations and acronyms; the use of excessive capitalization and tags was rather average; however, hashtags were not used very frequently. As it was mentioned, this might be due to choosing to analyze comment section over the parental posts. Significantly more hashtags were used on Twitter, emoticons and emojis on Instagram, as well as tagging. Facebook is leading in use of the rest of the lexical categories. As it was explained, this might be due to the fact that it is originally a computer-based platform with no comment-length limitations, in contrast with Instagram being a mobile application, therefore not that suitable

for writing, and Twitter being limited by the 140-character comment length. In most of the cases, the results were explained by these three facts.

As for emotional motivations of the users, positively motivated lexical items expressing, for instance, excitement, support, gratitude, respect, etc. were used most of the time, followed by negatively motivated items expressing anger, annoyance, frustration or sadness, powerlessness, disappointment, etc. Relatively low number of items expressing amusement were found, which is surprising, and explained by choosing to analyze comment sections instead of direct messaging channels. High number of neutral or uncategorized items have been found; these categories combined have similar number of occurrences as those positively motivated alone. That suggests, that the non-standard lexical features were often misused or used with no emotional motivations. The analysis has shown that Facebook is the most negative environment of the three platforms and Instagram, in contrast, highly positive. Twitter's results are rather balanced.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The goal of the thesis was to introduce non-standard lexical elements that occur in social media discourse and to analyze the frequency of their occurrence as well as their meaning. The theoretical part has described several topics: the communication and interactions on the Internet, the CMC; the effects of spoken language and informality on CMC; the discourse of specific social media, that is Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; and most importantly, the non-standard features used in the discourse of these social networking sites. These features were further examined in the analytical part of the thesis. This part focused mostly on the general categories of the lexical features, such as emoticons, excessive capitalization, etc. and on the meaning of each lexical feature involved in the research. The analysis also included broad classification of the lexical items on the level of emotional motivations of their authors; however, a detailed examination of the motivations was done within the subcategories of the lexical items; therefore, the majority of the analysis is focused on the lexical items and the interpretation of their subcategories, rather than on the emotional motivations in general.

The thesis has shown that most non-standard features are used on Facebook and Instagram, rather than on Twitter; and majority of them are emoticons and emojis, followed by excessive punctuation; on the other hand, hashtags are used relatively rarely. The results have shown that the use of tagging, abbreviations and acronyms, and excessive capitalization is rather average. Originally, it was expected that abbreviations and acronyms, as well as excessive capitalization would dominate the use of non-standard features along with emoticons and emojis and excessive punctuation. These expectations, however, proved to be wrong.

As expected, due to the range of available positively oriented emojis, they and emoticons were used, most of the time, in relation to positively marked content; with unusually high occurrence on Instagram. In contrast, abbreviations and acronyms were expected to occur frequently in emotionally motivated comments, however, most of them were emotionally neutral and served only the purpose of shortening. This difference between the expectations and reality might be a result of choosing rather serious parental posts; choosing some less serious content might result in less formal environment, therefore, more emotionally motivated comments.

Despite the low occurrence of hashtags in the analysis, most of them were also used for their functional purposes, not for expressing emotions, as expected. Hashtags were dominant on Twitter, with very little occurrence on the other two platforms, which was surprising, as hashtags are commonly perceived as a significant part of Instagram. However, the choice to

analyze comments sections instead of parental posts might have influenced these Instagram-related results. The results of tagging, in terms of the motivations for its use, were relatively balanced, however, in terms of individual platforms, the tagging feature was used mostly on Instagram.

Excessive punctuation was used frequently to express negative attitudes, such as anger or frustration, which was expected, since it is a simple method of expressing such emotions. Nevertheless, most of the occurrences were not emotionally motivated, for they only worked as signals for endings of comments or for separating them into several parts. The phenomenon of overpunctuation was used mostly on Facebook and relatively seldom on Twitter, leaving Instagram average in this category. Excessive capitalization occurred mostly in negatively motivated comments, similarly to excessive punctuation, this result was predictable. It is an interesting outcome that excessive capitalization almost never occurred on Instagram.

In terms of the users' motivations in general, positive emotions such as excitement, gratitude, etc. were the most frequent; followed by negative emotions such as anger, frustration, etc. In contrast, the instances of *support* or *interest* have occurred only rarely, as they are specific only for certain lexical features.

It is clear that social media discourse, especially Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, is highly influenced by language informality stemming from spoken discourse, especially in the form of emojis, emoticons, and other features that substitute, for instance, face expressions or raising voice in real conversations.

## 6 RESUMÉ

Tato práce se zabývá nestandardními lexikálními prvky, které se vyskytují v diskurzu sociálních sítí. Cílem je analyzovat jejich výskyt na populárních světových sociálních sítích, zhodnotit ho kvantitativně a také určit význam těchto prvků spolu s důvody jejich užití.

Práce je rozdělena na dvě hlavní části. Část teoretickou a praktickou. Část teoretická se zabývá popisem pojmů a témat klíčových k cíli práce. Mezi tato témata patří popis obecné komunikace v prostředí internetu, takzvané CMC; dále, jak je tento druh komunikace ovlivňován mluveným jazykem a jazykovou formalitou, která se promítá jak do mluveného jazyka, tak do online komunikace. Problematika mluveného jazyka a jazykové formality je rozebrána nejen v rámci specifického zaměření na počítačovou komunikaci, ale také obecně.

Dále jsou v teoretické části představeny jednotlivé sociální sítě, kterých se praktická část práce týká. Těmi jsou Facebook, Instagram a Twitter. Tyto sítě jsou popsány jak v obecné rovině, tak s ohledem na komunikaci. Poslední úsek teoretické části se týká detailního popisu jednotlivých nestandardních lexikálních rysů, které uživatelé výše zmíněných sociálních sítích využívají. Je přiblížena jejich charakteristika, význam a použití.

Praktická část práce je vedena formou analýzy těchto prvků v připraveném korpusu. Mezi tyto prvky patří: emotikony, emoji, zkratky, akronymy, hashtagy, tagging (označování uživatelů), nadměrná míra používání velkých písmen a nadměrná míra používání interpunkce. Tyto konkrétní prvky byly k analýze vybrány z důvodu jejich popularity mezi průměrnými uživateli internetu a sociálních sítí a díky faktu, že na ně průměrný uživatel denně naráží. To je také důvodem toho, proč nebyly vybrány i další způsoby zkracování slov, mimo zkratky a akronymy. Jejich výskyt není, z obecného pozorování, mezi běžnými uživateli častý. Naopak hashtagy a tagging byly zahrnuty do analýzy i přes jejich, na první pohled, časté využití pouze z funkčního hlediska. I přes to, že hashtagy a tagging typicky nemusí skrývat žádný citově zabarvený význam (na rozdíl od ostatních výše zmíněných lexikálních prvků), jsou pro běžného uživatele sociálních sítí, proto byly zahrnuty také.

Korpus k analýze byl sestaven z rovnoměrného počtu komentářů jednotlivých sociálních sítí. Na každé ze sociálních sítí bylo několik komunikačních kanálů, ze kterých bylo možné čerpat, u Facebooku například Messenger, u Instagramu Direct, celkově příspěvky různých stránek a uživatelů atp. Nakonec ale byly zvoleny sekce komentářů pod různými příspěvky vzhledem k jejich podobnosti na všech třech analyzovaných sociálních sítích. V rámci dosažení diverzity uživatelů a komentářů byly zvoleny náhodné příspěvky na nejvíce odebíraných nebo sledovaných sítích. Na Facebooku to byla fanouškovská stránka Facebook,

na Instagramu profil Instagramu, a na Twitteru uživatelský profil zpěvačky Katy Perry. Zjištění, že poslední z použitých profilů je orientován relativně jiným směrem než vybrané profily z Facebooku a Instagramu bylo původně ohrožující pro cíl práce, vzhledem k tomu, že komentáře mohly být silně zabarvené a orientované na specifickou problematiku, oproti univerzálním příspěvkům profilů Facebooku a Instagramu; nicméně byly dále v rámci zachování serióznosti vybrány náhodné poměrně populární stránky amerických zpravodajských serverů, které, nabízely vyrovnané prostředí, co se uživatelů týče. Také, některé z vybraných příspěvků se ukázaly být podobně orientované jako účet Katy Perry na Twitteru, tudíž byla dosažena požadovaná diverzita uživatelů i serióznost jejich komentářů.

Celkem byly vybrány tři příspěvky z každé sociální sítě a dvacet cílových komentářů pod každým příspěvkem, z čehož vyplývá, že k analýze sloužilo sto osmdesát komentářů. První část analýzy představila obecné statistiky, které ukázaly, že pouze v 70 % analyzovaných komentářů byl nalezen nějaký nestandardní lexikální prvek. Nicméně v těchto 126 komentářích bylo nalezeno 231 těchto prvků. Dále tato obecná část analýzy ukázala, že větší část těchto prvků (38,53 %) byla nalezena na Facebooku; na Instagramu jich bylo nalezeno pouze 32,9 % a na Twitteru 28,57 %. Tyto výsledky jsou vysvětleny tím, že Twitter je omezen délkou 140 znaků na zprávu, a Instagram, jakožto mobilní aplikace, neumožňuje uživateli rozsáhle a kvalitně se vyjádřit, tak jako to umožňuje Facebook, jenž je původně webovou stránkou užívanou na nemobilních zařízeních, která využívají klávesnice, a proto umožňují uživatelům větší míru projevu, kdežto uživatelé Twitteru a Instagramu jsou každý svým způsobem omezeni. Tato omezující specifika Twitteru a Instagramu byly nejčastějšími důvody různých výsledků jednotlivých kategorií hlavní části analýzy.

Tato část zahrnovala analýzu každé zkoumané kategorie a jejich podkategorií. Emotikony a emoji byly sloučeny do jedné kategorie pro jejich totožnost v použití. Zkratky a akronymy byly rovněž sloučeny vzhledem k tomu, že Ingo Plag považuje akronymy za podúroveň zkratk, a zároveň jejich použití je, podobně jako u emotikonů a emoji, téměř totožné. Zbylé lexikální prvky byly kategorizovány každý zvlášť. Každá z těchto šesti výsledných kategorií obsahovala několik podkategorií. Základ těchto podkategorií byl založen na motivaci uživatelů pro jejich použití, příkladem mohou být například pozitivně zabarvené emotikony, negativně zabarvená nadměrná interpunkce atp. Tento nadrámeček citových motivací byl zahrnut v téměř každé kategorii, nicméně většina kategorií měla specifické podkategorie zaměřené například na jejich funkčnost pro zachování objektivitu výzkumu. Jako příklad může sloužit kategorie hashtagů, která má unikátní podkategorii ‚support‘ vyjadřující podporu k určitému tématu nebo ideologii.

Tato nejrozsáhlejší a podrobná část analýzy byla shrnuta k jejímu konci, kde byly jednotlivé kategorie porovnány ve vztahu k sobě, nikoli v rámci podkategorií jako tomu bylo v hlavní části analýzy. Tato téměř finální část analýzy také mimo jiné ukázala, že emotikony a emoji se svými 63 výskyty byly nejrozšířenějším nestandardním lexikálním prvkem a hashtagy se svými 14 výskyty byly nejméně rozšířeným prvkem. Poslední část analýzy srovnala jednotlivé nadřámce citových motivací uživatelů a ukázala, že nestandardní prvky byly nejčastěji používány v pozitivně zabarveném kontextu (30,74 % případů). Vhodné je srovnání s negativně zabarveným kontextem (ve smyslu hněvu nebo frustrace atp.), kdy v tomto kontextu byly použity nestandardní prvky pouze v 19,91 % případů.

Dále je možné z analýzy určit, že Facebook je z analyzovaných sociálních sítí nejvíce negativním prostředím, vzhledem k tomu, že 24 výskytů bylo použito v negativním kontextu (např. hněv), 11 v také negativním kontextu (např. smutek), a pouze 17 výskytů v pozitivním kontextu, spolu s pouze 8 výskyty vyjadřujícími pobavení. Výsledný poměr tedy vykazuje 35 negativních výskytů proti 25 pozitivním. Naopak celkový poměr u Instagramu je pouze 11 negativně zabarvených výskytů proti 31 pozitivním; z toho vyplývá, že Instagram je celkově pozitivněji orientované prostředí než Facebook. V úplném závěru práce jsou shrnuty obecné výstupy z analýzy.

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## 8 APPENDICES

### 8.1 ABBREVIATIONS IN THE CORPUS

#### Emoticons & emojis:

- Negative attitudes, emotions (frustration, anger, annoyance, etc.) **Ea**
- Negative attitudes, emotions (sadness, powerlessness, disappointment, etc.) **Es**
- Positive attitudes, emotions (excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.) **Ep**
- Amusement **Em**
- Other **Eo**

#### Hashtags:

- Positive attitudes, emotions (excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.) **Hp**
- Supportive attitudes (i.e.: certain topics, films, music, ideologies, etc.) **Hr**
- Other **Ho**

#### Tags:

- Negative attitudes, emotions (frustration, anger, annoyance, etc.) **Ta**
- Positive attitudes, emotions (excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.) **Tp**
- Possible interest in the topic (either on the side of the author or the tagged user) **Ti**
- Amusement **Tm**
- Emotionally neutral addressing **Tn**
- Other **To**

#### Abbreviations & acronyms:

- Negative attitudes, emotions (frustration, anger, annoyance, etc.) **Aa**
- Negative attitudes, emotions (sadness, powerlessness, disappointment, etc.) **As**
- Positive attitudes, emotions (excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.) **Ap**
- Amusement **Am**
- Emotionally neutral **An**
- Other **Ao**

#### Excessive punctuation

- Negative attitudes, emotions (frustration, anger, annoyance, etc.) **Pa**
- Negative attitudes, emotions (sadness, powerlessness, disappointment, etc.) **Ps**
- Positive attitudes, emotions (excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.) **Pp**
- Other **Po**

#### Excessive capitalization

- Negative attitudes, emotions (frustration, anger, annoyance, etc.) **Ca**
- Negative attitudes, emotions (sadness, powerlessness, disappointment, etc.) **Cs**
- Positive attitudes, emotions (excitement, support, respect, gratitude, etc.) **Cp**
- Amusement **Cm**
- Other **Co**

## 8.2 DATA CORPUS

A video post about a beneficent event. Accessible at <https://www.facebook.com/facebook/videos/10105087071549853/>.

Text of the parental post: “Sophie volunteers with Kids Enjoy Exercise Now (KEEN), which provides recreational opportunities for kids with disabilities. She was able to raise funds to throw the KEEN kids an unforgettable prom. See more stories at [www.facebook.com/CommunityVoices](http://www.facebook.com/CommunityVoices).”

- 1.) Bless these people, we need more of them !
- 2.) Our daughter Barbara went to proms like that when she was in high school. She and her friends loved them.
- 3.) Great story. I was only one disabled girl to attend a high school in my hometown. I did go to a junior and senior proms in '88 and '89. I had great times there.
- 4.) Great work  <sup>[Ep]</sup> #facebook <sup>[Hr]</sup> can you please make 'Hug' reaction on posts, tnx <sup>[Ap]</sup>!
- 5.) What a wonderful young woman to think of others that are less fortunate & <sup>[An]</sup> bring them a night they'll always remember!
- 6.) Sanford has a prom for special needs kids every year at the Civic Center. People donate use of limousines and money is raised for prom dresses and tuxes or these items are donated. It's a grand affair!!! <sup>[Pp]</sup> I am so proud of our community for doing this!!
- 7.) What a Beautiful Idea!!! <sup>[Pp]</sup> We need to remember that there are kids who don't go to the Prom because no one wants to take them.
- 8.) IT IS AN AMAZING STORY THANKS FOR SHARING <sup>[Cp]</sup>
- 9.) What a wonderful Good Hearted Woman <sup>[Cp]</sup>!!!! <sup>[Pp]</sup>
- 10.) What a great job she is doing!!! <sup>[Pp]</sup>
- 11.) wow, how cool is this? just the coolest EVER <sup>[Cp]</sup>
- 12.) What a special young lady and bunch of young adults!  <sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 13.) Very proud of the youth today!!! <sup>[Pp]</sup> Wow, joyfull tears, Great story!... <sup>[Po]</sup>
- 14.) I need help from Facebook and I can't seem to find anyone to help me!!!! <sup>[Pa]</sup>
- 15.) Dear @Facebook <sup>[Tn]</sup>, Can you please show me how can I verify my business page with verification badge ? Many Thanks
- 16.) Love this! You are a very special woman! Your parents must be so proud!!  <sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 17.) WHAT AN AWESOME THING TO DO <sup>[Cp]</sup>!!!!!!!!!!!!!! <sup>[Pp]</sup>
- 18.) [Sara Ryberg](#) <sup>[Ti]</sup>, you would love this  <sup>[Ep]</sup>

19.) My fb<sup>[An]</sup> acct<sup>[An]</sup>/page has disappeared and I can't login and the code doesn't work. Tried resetting my password but it doesn't work either. Has been this way for three days now and have vanished from my friends fb<sup>[An]</sup> page. It's completely gone and I want and need it back. What has happened. This is just another one I created but my main one had many things I have saved and many important things and memories since 2009. WHAT<sup>[Ca]</sup> has happened to my acct<sup>[An]</sup>????? <sup>[Pa]</sup>

20.) Amazing. 🙄🙄🙄<sup>[Ep]</sup> So good to know there are good hearted people out there

A video post, teaser for a film against misinformation. Accessible at <https://www.facebook.com/facebook/videos/10157385565646729/>.

Text of the post: “Facing Facts’ gives an inside look at the teams and people working hard to prevent misinformation from spreading on Facebook. Watch the full film at [insidefeed.com/facingfacts](https://insidefeed.com/facingfacts).”

1.) Facebook, I wrote to you in your report a problem section yesterday about problems i'm having with my Facebook, I was just wondering when can I expect a reply back or when my problems will be fixed ?

2.) I like the new Insights with FB<sup>[An]</sup> update. Yet I still would like to also have the option to see trends in last week in addition to whole month. Please make this available once more.

3.) Why is it so hard to change my email account in Facebook? It does not let me change my new email and delete the old one... <sup>[Ps]</sup>HELP<sup>[Cs]</sup>... <sup>[Ps]</sup>it is very aggravating. Thank you.. <sup>[Po]</sup>

4.) THANK YOU FACEBOOK FOR A WORLD FULL OF MANY WONDERFUL 'JOYS'<sup>[Co]</sup>

5.) All I want to do is delete my account due to privacy violation and it wont let me!!!! <sup>[Pa]</sup>HELP<sup>[Ca]</sup>

6.) Please fix your birthday notifications. I never get the notifications anymore.

7.) Would be nice if you could fix the feed so I can see more than a handful of posts and that they aren't three days old!!!! <sup>[Pa]</sup>

8.) plz<sup>[As]</sup> guys smone<sup>[As]</sup> help me to bring back my account because FB<sup>[An]</sup> disabled it and i dont know why how can i talk with FB<sup>[An]</sup> support team i send to FB<sup>[An]</sup> my id and passport plz<sup>[As]</sup> plz<sup>[As]</sup> help me

- 9.) Won't you PLEASE<sup>[Ca]</sup> stop automatically switching us to the page that shows everyone we have blocked when we block someone ???<sup>[Pa]</sup> I lose my place on my timeline every time. There's absolutely NO NEED<sup>[Ca]</sup> to switch us to the blocked page !!!<sup>[Pa]</sup> Thank you !!!<sup>[Pa]</sup>
- 10.) I'm not sure if this is the right place to reach out but I can not figure out how to solve a problem with our business site access. My wife and I own a business and one of our former employees who had admin access has taken control of our page. We do not have the capacity to log in to that site or retrieve our many 5star business reviews. Can someone offer a way we can prove the business is owned by us and give us control without interrupting the site?
- 11.) Hello Facebook<sup>[Tn]</sup>, Can you recover our conversation for me? Because our conversation was I unintentionally deleted because my phone got lagged. Please recover our conversation as soon as possible. Thank you!
- 12.) Facebook - please help! I do not post ads and will never do so; however, I got an email from the Facebook Ads Team saying I wa billed \$50.00 for ads I ran. I went into Ads Manager and I can see that someone posted ads - BUT IT WASN'T<sup>[Po]</sup> ME<sup>[Cs]</sup>. How do I turn off Ads Manager since it appears someone else is using my account.
- 13.) Dear FACEBOOK<sup>[Co]</sup>, Thank u<sup>[An]</sup> for helping us. But may i ask? Why i cant login sometimes?
- 14.) Facebook<sup>[Po]</sup> connected me with my lost family and friends that I Will never had contacted with thanks Facebook I. <sup>[Po]</sup>love you 🤔👍<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 15.) My notifications won't open up , HELP<sup>[Ca]</sup> !
- 16.) It is a FACT<sup>[Ca]</sup> that every link in my Support Inbox is broken!!
- 17.) Please fix the messenger already it's all gray and no picture at all 🙄<sup>[Es]</sup>
- 18.) Why is it when I check MOST RECENT<sup>[Ca]</sup> it never shows MOST RECENT<sup>[Ca]</sup>?
- 19.) Can you please reply to my messages????? <sup>[Pa]</sup>
- 20.) 🙄<sup>[Ea]</sup>EXCUSE ME Facebook<sup>[Ta]</sup> ITS WEDNESDAY 🗓️<sup>[Ea]</sup>MAY 30,2018!!! <sup>[Pa]</sup> WHY IS MY ENTIRE TIMELINE SHOWING POST FROM MONDAY MAY 28. 2018????? <sup>[Pa]</sup> YOU HAVE PPL<sup>[Aa]</sup> THINKING IM STALKING THEM LIKE THEIR POST FROM MONDAY<sup>[Ca]</sup> 🙄<sup>[Ea]</sup>

A link to a news article (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/01/health/romaine-ecoli-outbreak-deaths.html?smid=fb-nytimes&smtyp=cur>) called "Four More People Die From Tainted Romaine Lettuce". Accessible at <https://www.facebook.com/nytimes/posts/10151601582639999>.

Text of the post: "The total count now: 197 people from 35 states were sickened, and 5 have died.

Food and Drug Administration officials said, however, that romaine now for sale on grocery shelves is safe to eat."

- 1.) Salad is mean. A donut would never do this.
- 2.) "Some of the ill patients ..." Very poor grammar. You can write that a patient is ill, but you can't talk about an ill patient. The correct phrase is "sick patient."
- 3.) What is it with Romaine Lettuce? What is wrong with American lettuce? Make lettuce great again. 😊<sup>[Em]</sup>
- 4.) Can't even eat healthy anymore 😞<sup>[Es]</sup> prayers for the families that lost loved ones.
- 5.) RIP<sup>[As]</sup> to those who passed and may flowers be laid over their romaines.
- 6.) A doughnut 🍩<sup>[Eo]</sup> would never kill
- 7.) But HURRY<sup>[Cm]</sup> ! Let's deregulate everything >^,,^<<sup>[Em]</sup>
- 8.) This can only be stopped by banning all Romanians from entering the US<sup>[An]</sup>!!!!!!!<sup>[Po]</sup>  
#MAGA<sup>[Ho]</sup>
- 9.) Mei<sup>[Ti]</sup> good thing i dont eat greens !
- 10.) Newton Liu<sup>[Ti]</sup> good thing you don't eat lettuce
- 11.) Susan Laga Bleiwise<sup>[Tm]</sup> you literally just told me its okay to eat this
- 12.) Some people use tariffs.....<sup>[Po]</sup> other people use excrement.....<sup>[Po]</sup>
- 13.) What pesticides did Pruit recently deregulate!
- 14.) Will Wiseman<sup>[Tm]</sup> wow lettuce so healthy
- 15.) Plz<sup>[Am]</sup> don't die Karina<sup>[Tm]</sup> thx<sup>[Am]</sup>
- 16.) Thanks Obama
- 17.) I just ate that for dinner
- 18.) See, vegetables are deadly.
- 19.) Just grow your own. It's not illegal yet, is it? We should all be doing more of that.
- 20.) This is why I drink.

A photo of an injured dog. Accessible at <https://www.instagram.com/p/BiVI4fhhNpX/>.

Text of the post: “Photo by @apupnamedsquish

Hello, world! Meet today’s #WeeklyFluff: Squish (@apupnamedsquish), a joyful pup with a loving and lopsided face. Found as a stray 5-month-old puppy with what was later determined to be blunt force trauma to the right side of his face, veterinarian Danielle Boyd adopted Squish from an animal shelter. ‘Even with all Squish has endured, nothing slows him down, and his injuries only made him stronger,’ says Squish’s human. ‘Squish has a bubbly personality. He can make me smile even on my worst days.’

Danielle hopes that Squish’s story will encourage others to adopt, foster and care for animals in need. ‘There are so many animals that need a loving home. They might not have had the same heartbreak as Squish endured, but they are special just the same,’ she says. ‘I hope Squish continues to spread smiles and happiness and inspire others to look for beauty in every form.’”

- 1.) That is so sad 😞😞😞<sup>[Es]</sup>
- 2.) Wish him all the love in the world
- 3.) 😊😊😊<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 4.) @toby\_labra<sup>[Tp]</sup> ❤️<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 5.) #lovely<sup>[Hp]</sup> #cute<sup>[Hp]</sup>
- 6.) 🙄<sup>[Ea]</sup>
- 7.) This dog makes me cry tears of joy! <sup>[Eo]</sup> 😊<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 8.) Beautiful baby. I am glad that you are loved and cared for. Don't know how someone could be so cruel.
- 9.) He is beautiful and I wish they knew who did that baby like that no animal or child deserves to be abused no matter what they did and I for one strongly believe that animals are children just in a different form they both depend on us for food shelter and love and the abusers should have their rights to have either child or animal taken from them
- 10.) What happened is he/she ok<sup>[An]</sup>... <sup>[Po]</sup> 🙄<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 11.) He’s beautiful 😊<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 12.) Awe😊<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 13.) Squish is a pure love and cute
- 14.) He is truly amazing and beautiful god bless him
- 15.) I would have gone with smudge- he’s so cute haha

- 16.) what the hell is that poor dog ok<sup>[An]</sup> 🐕<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 17.) Beautiful, sweet pup. Thank you for loving this most lovable dog.
- 18.) Awww what happened to him or her
- 19.) Giving one hope that we can overcome anything we are dealt in this life 😊<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 20.) That is 😊<sup>[Es]</sup> that 🐕<sup>[Eo]</sup> only has one eye😞😞😞😞<sup>[Es]</sup>

A video of two women proposing to each other at the same time. Accessible at <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bjb9AutnU0V/>.

Text of the post: “‘I think it was awesome that we were able to share that moment with so many people.’ Jessa Gillaspie and Becky McCabe have just got engaged. 💍 Unusually, both women were planning to surprise each other and propose on the same day out at Memphis Zoo in Tennessee. They both had rings ready, but Becky beat Jessa to getting down on one knee. ❤️ #proposal #marriageproposal #love #bbcnews”

- 1.) I am really disappointed at BBC<sup>[An]</sup> and CNN<sup>[An]</sup> news.. <sup>[Po]</sup> How could be this kind of useless video posted in here. I already unfollowed CNN<sup>[An]</sup>!!
- 2.) Disgusting
- 3.) ❤️<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 4.) @rizkioners<sup>[Ta]</sup> Where did Jesus say ‘I am not God, do not worship me’ Find the verse for me in exact words.
- 5.) @jbd1360<sup>[Tp]</sup> thank you 🙏<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 6.) @fravverella<sup>[Tn]</sup>
- 7.) So beautiful!
- 8.) Crazy. 🤔👉<sup>[Ea]</sup>
- 9.) @sabassam22<sup>[Tn]</sup> ur welcome
- 10.) @jessicarlas<sup>[Ta]</sup> I know right?! 😊<sup>[Ta]</sup>
- 11.) Man yall<sup>[An]</sup> need to stop hating the people and hate the sin. We are all guilty of sin.
- 12.) @santhiya30<sup>[Ti]</sup> it’s a double yes :p<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 13.) @itsrubyyeo<sup>[Ta]</sup> what? Allah Means<sup>[Co]</sup> GOD<sup>[Ca]</sup> .. <sup>[Po]</sup>the only God that created the world .. <sup>[Po]</sup>we Muslims believe in the same God of Abraham,Moises and jesus .. <sup>[Po]</sup>até you telling me that you were created diferente from all of us ?
- 14.) @taylorbreaker<sup>[Tp]</sup> lmao<sup>[Ap]</sup> yasssss ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 15.) Fake and staged 😊<sup>[Em]</sup>

- 16.) ewhhhh
- 17.) Just feels wrong..<sup>[Po]</sup> idk<sup>[Ao]</sup>. Carrying on.
- 18.) @sabassam22<sup>[Tn]</sup> Don't be so hateful..<sup>[Po]</sup>hope you find love and peace
- 19.) That's beautiful!
- 20.) @jes\_anne<sup>[Ti]</sup> this could be us

A photo from the royal wedding. Accessible at <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bi9ReCqH-ef/>.

Text of the post: “❤️ The moment Prince Harry and Meghan Markle met at the altar.  
#royalwedding”

- 1.) 🍷🍷🍷🍷<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 2.) I'm so happy for them. Very in love. Beautiful, elegant, wedding. She has class.
- 3.) AWESOME<sup>[Cp]</sup>! Watched TWICE<sup>[Cp]</sup>.
- 4.) Just magical, wishing them the very best of luck for the hard work starts now !
- 5.) Congratulations black queen and her husband
- 6.) That woman gonna<sup>[An]</sup> cause a lot of trouble
- 7.) @hannaahbeck<sup>[Tp]</sup> yeah true
- 8.) Very sweet. 😊<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 9.) Congratulations\_<sup>[Po]</sup> Prince Harry \_\_\_<sup>[Po]</sup> and Meghan \_\_\_<sup>[Po]</sup> Prince Harry I will do what you ask\_\_<sup>[Po]</sup>And stop worrying \_\_<sup>[Po]</sup>
- 10.) They look genuinely happy here
- 11.) 🍷😊😊😊😊😊👉😊😊😊<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 12.) Congratulations! She's beautiful, worthy girl. And Prince Harry is much lucky to get married her. Be happy and hold hand in hand 4ever<sup>[Ap]</sup> 😊☺<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 13.) Lovely🍷<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 14.) So gorgeous😊<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 15.) Awesome couple ❤️<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 16.) A very, very beautiful wedding!
- 17.) I wasnt any pricess married but My<sup>[Eo]</sup> Dress<sup>[Eo]</sup> made by my Mum( RIP<sup>[As]</sup>) was 100 times more beautiful than that...<sup>[Po]</sup> all embroidered in pearls not wait that dress dissapoited every one
- 18.) @pauline\_lullaby<sup>[Ti]</sup> totally agreed
- 19.) A lovely wedding gown...<sup>[Po]</sup> Congratulations &<sup>[An]</sup> Best Wishes to the newlyweds

20.) Beautiful couple despite the hate they're receiving ❤️❤️<sup>[Ep]</sup>

A motivational tweet. Accessible at <https://twitter.com/katyperry/status/997212523316199424>.

Text of the post: "Everything is energy, words are vibrations, remember words are ARE powerful. Change I can't to I can. I won't to I will. You can shift that energy my angels ✨"

- 1.) I can beat my cancer and I will! 🙌<sup>[Ep]</sup> I'm going to tell this to myself now. Love you ❤️<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 2.) Love you @katyperry<sup>[Tp]</sup> ❤️<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 3.) thank you you're my biggest inspiration in life ✨<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 4.) Stop being so inspiring my poor mortal brain can't take it
- 5.) You should follow your own advice. Just read your comments about Meghan Markle's dress. I can deal with you not liking it, but making it a competition between two women is just not how women should support one another.
- 6.) Your words are so inspiring, Angel 😊<sup>[Eo]</sup>
- 7.) @BeccaBoomm<sup>[Ti]</sup> positive vibes ☀️<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 8.) I greatly admire you Katy...<sup>[Po]</sup> And I'm 65 😊<sup>[Em]</sup>
- 9.) Yeahhhhhhhh! ✨🌻<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 10.) it's hard
- 11.) I love u<sup>[Ap]</sup> mom so much ❤️<sup>[Ep]</sup> thank u<sup>[Ap]</sup> for everything
- 12.) Vibrations from the frequencies/compression waves of your music, are an acute testimony to how capable #sound<sup>[Ho]</sup> is of general #creation<sup>[Ho]</sup>. #Gods<sup>[Ho]</sup> demands were heard before seen- "Let there be light."
- 13.) I remember when you were thinking of changing the fandom name from Katycats to Angels. Nothing is impossible. Anything is possible if putting your mind and commitment to it. That is how I like to try and learn.
- 14.) See u<sup>[An]</sup> in two weeks babe
- 15.) Typo Queen 😊<sup>[Em]</sup>
- 16.) notice me
- 17.) Will you ever write a tweet without any typos
- 18.) i love u<sup>[An]</sup> from the bottom of my heart 🕊️<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 19.) i WILL<sup>[Cs]</sup> meet you someday 😔<sup>[Es]</sup> ❤️<sup>[Ep]</sup>

20.) YOUR POSITIVE WAY IS SO REWARDING<sup>[Cp]</sup> !

A tweet with a link related to American citizens' salaries. Accessible at <https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1002863666063200256>.

Text of the post: "Most Americans aren't happy with their salaries. Here's how to change that: <https://cnn.it/2J3h6fG>"

- 1.) Jobs are for the ones working in them. They are not for the employers that hire them. Both can be exclusive, but we work in order to pay the bills and other things we do in life. Plutocracy is the problem...<sup>[Po]</sup> not laziness of the workers.
- 2.) How badly have the school systems failed when people still believe that Socialism is a good idea? Can't fix stupid.
- 3.) Swap capitalism for socialism.
- 4.) Save up 50k<sup>[An]</sup> and move to Baja Mexico. You won't be disappointed
- 5.) This facts are crazy but true
- 6.) Americans are much happier with their wages now than when the fraud Obama was in office. #MAGA<sup>[Hr]</sup>
- 7.) Most Americans are under paid.
- 8.) Union? Collective bargaining?
- 9.) Cause everyone is greedy and wants more.
- 10.) #Winning<sup>[Hp]</sup> #Jobs<sup>[Hp]</sup> #MAGA<sup>[Hr]</sup> <sup>[Ep]</sup> #Trump2020<sup>[Hr]</sup>
- 11.) STOP PRINTING MORE MONEY MAKING OUR DOLLAR WORTHLESS!!!<sup>[Pa]</sup>  
THANKS OBAMA<sup>[Ca]</sup>!
- 12.) Dont vote for a Democrat.
- 13.) With jobless rate falling to 3.9%, how many country can match this? Americans can't be happier!
- 14.) I'm happy CNN<sup>[An]</sup> I worked for my salary.
- 15.) Come to turkey
- 16.) Who is happy with his salary
- 17.) Unions
- 18.) YES!!!<sup>[Pp]</sup> DING DING DING!!!<sup>[Pp]</sup> FIRST THOUGHTFUL ANSWER ALL MORNING<sup>[Cp]</sup>!

19.) I'll give you an answer...<sup>[Po]</sup> don't vote Democrats into office. I never made more money when we had a Democrat in the White House. True Fact!

20.) Yes it is what i live in now. And it is not good.

A tweet announcing an update. Accessible at <https://twitter.com/Twitter/status/999033114197446661>.

Text of the post: “ updated Tweet compose box

The new Tweet compose box makes it possible for you to move more easily between your Tweet and timeline, so all of your Tweets are on point.”

- 1.) we need "tweet editing"
- 2.) Still waiting for an EDIT<sup>[Ca]</sup> button or spellcheck/spellchange button. You met all the needs no one has asked for. But ignored the one request that universal @jack<sup>[Ta]</sup> @Twitter<sup>[Ta]</sup>
- 3.) @CameronYardeJnr<sup>[Ta]</sup> And still they don't introduce an edit button! <sup>[Ea]</sup>
- 4.) I cannot follow anyone? It doesn't show who I follow, my timeline doesn't refresh. What gives @Twitter<sup>[To]</sup>, I have verified my email to authenticate the account &<sup>[An]</sup> login verification that it is me
- 5.) All we want is our timeline to show in chronological order so I don't reply to tweets from 20 hours ago, and an edit option for typos.
- 6.) Thanks to Twitter <sup>[Ep]</sup> for your help and for your prompt attention Investigation<sup>[Co]</sup> justice. I love you so much and also love all my friends on Twitter.
- 7.) Now an edit function and we're set ^^<sup>[Ep]</sup>
- 8.) how about fixing the verification request forms first! TIA<sup>[Aa]</sup>
- 9.) Twtr<sup>[Ap]</sup> rocks
- 10.) ban the nazis

