Performing Peace:
Public speech acts and the discursive construction of solidarity

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This talk will put forward a framework for studying the role of the media and publicity in forming the relationship between speech and acts in political discourse. Its impetus derives from two assumptions about the role of publicity in turning words into political processes: first that the relationship between media, politics and language use is under-theorized in the various disciplines of the humanities and social sciences; and, second, that disentangling this relationship is crucial for understanding of how political processes like conflicts and reconciliations evolve over time. After introducing the conceptual framework of public speech acts, I will focus on the role of performative speech in the context of peace communication and demonstrate how the Hebrew speech act verb Le-varech and its English equivalents (congratulate, welcome, praise, thank, greet, bless, and wish), enhance relationship and shape de-escalation processes in both national and global political affairs.

Bio
Zohar Kampf is Senior Lecturer of Language and Communication in the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has previously held visiting Scholar posts at the UCLA Centre for Language, Interaction and Culture (2007-2008), and at the Culture and Communication program at the Annenberg School for Communications, University of Pennsylvania (2014-2015). His main research interest lies in the multifaceted ties between media, language and politics. These linkages appear in his studies of public speech acts, mediated political interactions, media accountability processes and in his work on the changing media coverage of violent conflicts. He is the author of 2 books (Transforming Media Coverage of Violent Conflicts: The New Face of War, 2013; Media at Times of War and Terror, 2012 with Tamar Liebes) and of more than 50 chapters and articles in leading communication and discourse journals.

Further info: https://scholars.huji.ac.il/smart/dr-zohar-kampf
Background paper: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0378216615003409