



*Informal Communication in the age of artificial
Intelligence and the Spread of Hate Speech in Algerian
Enterprises*

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the specificity of Informal communication in the age of widespread use of artificial intelligence technologies, and the freedom of expression and exchange of various feelings, contents, and opinions that it enables.

All of this makes Informal communication deviate from its primary tasks and become a space for promoting and disseminating hate speech among individuals or groups within the same institution. Even if it does not lead to violent outcomes, it will sow seeds of prejudice, division, hatred, and various negative sentiments.

✓ **Keywords :** Informal communication, artificial intelligence, hate speech, algorithms, the Algerian enterprise.

1. INTRODUCTION

Informal communication has become increasingly significant within institutions. The process of informal communication is dictated by psychological and social factors, resulting in natural patterns, actions, and behaviors such as discussing work issues or personal matters during or outside working hours. This fosters social relationships among employees and creates an atmosphere of understanding, exchange, and fluidity in both formal and informal interactions.

Informal communication is considered the counterpart of formal communication, serving as its complement and support during periods of continuous work pressure. Its presence within an institution provides a sense of comfort during work and facilitates communication among employees. It also eases the flow of formal work by establishing informal communication networks. With the technological advancements and the integration of artificial intelligence technologies in various platforms, networks, and applications, these have become an integral part of individuals' daily lives, carrying their interactions, feelings, and opinions.

As a result, these spaces have become a free arena for expressing opinions without restrictions, censorship, or direction. However, this has opened the door for some extremists to exploit these spaces to spread content containing hatred, division, animosity, and disdain towards individuals or groups based on regional affiliation, color, ethnic origin, gender, or other factors.

Therefore, this research paper addresses informal communication in the era of artificial intelligence and its impact on the spread of hate speech in Algerian enterprises.

- The problem of studying :

Due to the formal communication following the organizational structure of the institution and progressing according to its hierarchical levels using official channels to achieve organization and coordination among various departments and interests within the institution, there arises a need for another type of communication that does not rely on formalities. This communication is not bound by the organizational structure or the functional hierarchy but occurs spontaneously outside the official channels.

Informal communication is deemed necessary in any institution for the spontaneous and flexible exchange of information, without adhering to the functional hierarchy. The daily interaction among employees and their presence together for extended periods generate topics for dialogue, discussion, and exchange of opinions. This type of communication has undergone significant changes in its forms, methods, and mediums, particularly with technological advancements and the emergence of artificial intelligence technologies.

Informal communication now occupies multiple spaces and time frames, not limited to the workplace or the institution where employees are present. It extends beyond working hours and locations, occupying significant spaces in Algerian institutions, both real and virtual, without surveillance or boundaries. This can divert it from its primary objectives and lead it towards hate speech, discrimination, and defamation against individuals or groups based on racial, regional, color, gender, or other affiliations.

This study revolves around the following question: How does informal communication in the age of artificial intelligence affect the spread of hate speech in Algerian enterprises?

This central question encompasses the following sub-questions :

1. What are the foundations of informal communication ?
2. What is the nature of informal communication in Algerian institutions in the age of artificial intelligence ?
3. What are the effects of informal communication through artificial intelligence technologies on the spread of hate speech and methods to confront it?

2. Conceptual introduction :

2-1. informal communication :

"Logres" and "Pemartin" define informal communication as: All communications that occur outside the formal framework of the organizational chart, where information and data are exchanged among employees in every institution without going through administrative and functional sequences. This includes various informal conversations, impromptu meetings, and all forms of unofficial communication in all institutions (Shwiya, 1986, p. 85).

Informal communication is an inevitable result of the personal or social relationships that may develop between individuals outside the formal framework, without following the administrative hierarchy. They communicate in informal ways that are not subject to specific rules or principles, in order to exchange casual conversations, vent their feelings and conflicts, and share opinions, as well as various social and professional needs.

2-2. Hate Speech :

There is no precise definition of hate speech, and it can be defined as any speech or content that involves derogatory remarks towards an individual or group of people based on religious, racial, ethnic, ideological, or other grounds (Al-Rahmaneh, 10/11/2023).

Hate speech encompasses all feelings of discrimination, disgust, hatred, aversion, bias, ridicule, or discrimination towards an individual or group of individuals, and all

resulting emotions, behaviors, or harm that may be inflicted on the disliked person or people. Hate speech includes all forms of discriminatory content practiced by an individual or entity towards others, carrying feelings of hate, resentment, discrimination, without necessarily leading to specific outcomes (Al-Sarraf, 12/15/2023)

As stated on the official website of the United Nations regarding hate speech, it refers to forms of expression that spread discrimination, hatred, hostility, promote, or justify it against an individual or group based on religion, race, nationality, color, descent, or gender. Even if these statements do not directly incite violence, they sow the seeds of bigotry, discrimination, and prejudice that can lead to violent behavior (site: <https://www.kaiciid.org/ar/news-events/news/>, (10/11/2023, 00:12).

Informal communication is an inevitable result of the personal or social relationships that may develop between individuals outside the formal framework, without following the administrative hierarchy. They communicate in informal ways that are not subject to specific rules or principles, in order to exchange casual conversations, vent their feelings and conflicts, and share opinions, as well as various social and professional needs.

2-3.Artificial intelligence (AI) :

Is difficult to precisely define because it is not limited to a specific device or technology. Rather, it encompasses various advancements and changes that affect the structure governing different devices, technologies, platforms, and applications, enabling them to simulate human intelligence and behave according to their own reasoning.

Therefore, artificial intelligence can be described as a model or system that incorporates techniques, methodologies, and methods for producing various devices, software, applications, and platforms with the ability to perform various cognitive processes and tasks using simulated human capabilities (Musa, Bilal, 2019, p. 20).

Artificial intelligence algorithms refer to the techniques written and implemented by programmers to analyze and process as Big Data, in order to derive the desired outcomes. These algorithms are a set of computational instructions designed to achieve a specific goal or task. They are developed and monitored by computer scientists and data analysts to produce the desired results (Musa, 2019, p98).

3. Informal Communication Characteristics and Motives :

3-1 Characteristics :

Informal communication involves the exchange of ideas and information outside the scope of work, resulting from the development of social and personal relationships between individuals. The purposes of Informal communication include :

- Informal discussions among employees.
- Communication between employees to exchange personal material interests or moral interests such as friendship, social visits, lunch outings.
- Discussions among coworkers outside the scope of work.

Informal communication involves face-to-face conversations on non-work-related matters such as post-work meetings, lunch gatherings, parties, etc. Some early studies have linked informal communication to technological tools and multimedia, and these new technological tools have evolved recently. Face-to-face communication has indeed been replaced by various technological tools (such as fax, emails, social media, and artificial intelligence tools...) (vpolat and all, 2018, p 103)

Informal communications are characterized by intimacy, privacy, and close relationships. Members may discuss their mistakes or future plans related to the team, company, or personally. Non-formal communication can be fraught with risks and may involve gains or losses, as it is primarily built on trust between the parties involved. Developing and nurturing such relationships without trust is difficult (vpolat & all, 2018, p 103)

Informal communication refers to the exchange of information within an organization through unofficial channels, bypassing formal communication structures. This includes communication that occurs spontaneously and without adhering to established protocols. The characteristics of non-formal communication can be outlined as follows :

- Not tied to official organization : It extends beyond compliance with official laws and regulations.
- Importance during times of stress, anxiety, insecurity, tension, and sensitivities : Individuals are more in need of it when seeking assistance to achieve a specific goal.

Oral communication : It is characterized by its high speed in message transmission, with about 90% of the conveyed data being accurate. Individuals in this type of communication are more active if they have good news (Al-Sirafi, 2005, p. 83).

This type of communication is spontaneous and informal, characterized by its lack of permanence compared to formal communication. Conversely, it is marked by flexibility and the participants' voluntary desire to establish and activate communicative relationships through personal connections, fellowship, and friendship (Madas, 2002, p. 69).

This type facilitates the rapid and accurate acquisition of information that may be difficult to obtain through official communication channels. It is a healthy phenomenon as employees within any institution develop informal communications due to their prolonged presence and interaction with each other (Shiha, 1993, p. 394).

3-2. Motivations :

-It serves as a valuable source of information since it is richer than the formal communication system.

-It satisfies individuals' social needs from another perspective (Al-Shamaa, 1994, p. 284).

-informal communication also contributes to conveying information to higher levels and everything related to employees' feedback, positions, feelings, etc., as a primary source of feedback regarding employees (Karoush, 2004, p. 76).

This facilitates the process of reverse communication, meaning two-way communication that works on conveying information to the highest levels of management.

-The desire of organizational leaders or some of them to control all matters in the organization and the absence of the principle of fairness in the organization, leading to the emergence of what is called loyal and close individuals.

-Not adhering to and complying with official organizational channels, attributed to their ambiguity and lack of clarity.

-Workers' fear of using the formal structure to convey their ideas, viewing this type of communication as secretive and as an essential means of expressing themselves freely (Al-Omyan, 2002, p. 250).

4. Non-formal communication in the age of artificial intelligence :

Formal communication holds significant importance in exchanging information through the administrative hierarchy in organizations, serving as the primary means of information transfer within the organizational structure. On the other hand, informal communications serve as a complement to formal communication, transferring and receiving additional information that enhances the information conveyed through formal channels.

Informal communications facilitate direct communication mechanisms and meetings between leaders and subordinates at various levels of management, aiding in the effective exchange of ideas and information. Additionally, informal communications are considered one of the cheapest and least costly means of information transfer, as they occur voluntarily and rapidly compared to formal communication (Ayasrah & Al-Anati, 2007, p. 108).

Informal communication reflects an individual's social nature, as it necessitates interaction with others in line with their social being. Its role lies in building social relationships, whether for friendship purposes or otherwise. Informal communications and social relationships contribute to boosting morale, enhancing social bonds, and spreading positive energy among members of the organization.

Internal social control towards organizational members and external control towards other parties are considered important means of positively influencing others' behavior. Informal social interaction contributes to creating a positive and healthy work environment, where collaboration and understanding among individuals are encouraged, fostering a sense of belonging and effective communication within the organization (Arafa & Shalabi, 2002, p. 241).

Various charters and constitutions around the world have stipulated the right of individuals to express their opinions freely. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms this right, which includes the freedom to embrace opinions without any interference, and to gather, receive, and disseminate news and ideas without being bound by geographical boundaries or by any means (Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

While freedom of expression brings many benefits, it also comes with challenges and risks, including the spread of hate speech. Despite the significant advantages of freedom of expression, it can also contribute to the dissemination of harmful and offensive speech, including hate speech. This can exacerbate tensions and divisions within societies and may lead to increased instances of discrimination and violence.

Therefore, communities, organizations, and social media service providers must work together to develop strategies to combat hate speech and harmful speech. This includes raising awareness and educating people about their negative effects, as well as developing effective mechanisms to deal with them, such as encouraging constructive and guided discussions and promoting positive behavior across digital platforms (site : <https://masaar.net>, (11/04/2023, 00:12)).

The advancement of artificial intelligence technologies has had a significant positive impact on the exercise of the right to freedom of expression by enabling a larger number of people to express their opinions publicly. However, with the increase in types of publicly published speech, harmful speech also increases. As more people are exposed to a wider variety of speech through social media platforms, most of them become susceptible to receiving harmful speech. It can be noted that hate speech is the most prevalent type of this harmful speech (site : [https : //masaar.net/](https://masaar.net/), (11/04/2023, 00:12).

There is no doubt that the integration of informal communication with artificial intelligence technologies is inevitable, especially as the latter has dominated the internet environment, enabling various devices, programs, websites, and applications to simulate the human mind to a great extent. Algerian employees in various institutions use at least some of these technologies in their informal communications, and these technologies have provided many advantages for informal communication in Algerian institutions, including :

- Utilizing non-working hours for communications that can support and enhance formal communications.
- Opening the space for employees to communicate informally through virtual spaces, allowing them to present their ideas and actively contribute to finding solutions to various problems, as well as engaging in discussions and exchanging opinions on various issues.
- Breaking free from formalities that distinguish face-to-face communication, and freeing from the control of higher-ups in decision-making and information monopolization. This paves the way for democracy in freely expressing opinions and getting rid of all forms of shyness and silence that may deprive individuals of expressing their views.

- Artificial intelligence technologies enable employees to express themselves, satisfy their psychological and social needs, and interact and exchange in a way that serves the goals of the institution and its employees.

5. informal communication and hate speech in Algerian institutions :

The use of artificial intelligence technologies in all its forms, such as chatbot applications and robots, has been associated with the proliferation of hate speech. Statistics indicate a fourfold increase in hate speech on Facebook and Instagram in 2020, leading to the deletion of 22.5 million posts on Facebook and 3.3 million posts on Instagram. This enabled millions of individuals to exchange feelings of hatred among themselves (Al-Sarraf, 12/15/2023).

Hatred can manifest in written, visual, auditory, or electronic forms and generally includes negative attitudes against an individual or group based on religious, ethnic, or ideological grounds. It may involve incitement, calls for negative actions, and practices such as humiliation, exclusion, discrimination, rejection, ostracism, bias, and bigotry. It can even escalate to violent behavior towards the targeted party.(Al-Sarraf, 12/15/2023).

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination categorizes forms of racial discrimination as follows (Zakag, 2019):

- Promotion of racial superiority ideas and encouragement of the belief in racial superiority of certain groups over others.
- Reinforcement of divisions and discrimination between racial groups.
- Incitement to hatred and resentment towards specific racial groups.
- Encouragement of violent acts or behaviors based on racial hatred.

In many countries, three-quarters of the victims of online hate speech are minorities, with women belonging to these minorities often being disproportionately targeted. In this context, De Varennes argues that hate speech is often followed by hate crimes and violence. Hate speech can also pave the way for dehumanizing minorities, blaming them, and normalizing hatred. We need to learn lessons from the past and

history and make every possible effort to eradicate hate speech from the internet (Recommendations of the Forum on Minority Issues United Nations Forum on Minority Issues, 11/02/2023).

Certainly, in all institutions or places, there are extremist or biased groups, and these extremists seek to spread hate speech and disseminate messages of contempt and disparagement on social media platforms and internet sites. There are many ways they use to achieve this, including commenting on news websites. Often, these comments are unrelated to the news or the topic itself (Al-Khasawneh & Al-Atoum, 2018, p. 11). However, it affects informal relationships among employees in Algerian institutions, leading to discrimination and differentiation between employees, through ridiculing others, mockery, hatred, and aversion based on racial, physical, tribal, or geographical grounds. This leads to harm and damage to others and results in the emergence of informal blocs based on narrow affiliations that do not serve the institution.

Algorithms within the framework of artificial intelligence deal with vast amounts of data generated by search engines and databases (descriptive data) selectively. These algorithms identify results directly related to the word or term the user is searching for.

Researchers have developed many algorithms that effectively perform this function, including the "Quality" project, which highlights the outstanding ability of algorithmic systems to select reliable data sources and organize them logically. Researchers in this project select data sources deemed trustworthy according to experts' recommendations, then organize them in a manner representing a mechanism for linking electronic content to specific search terms.

Thanks to these algorithms, user experience is improved across search engines, providing accurate results closely related to what they are searching for with precision and efficiency. These technologies contribute to facilitating access to useful information and improving the quality of online searches (Kreikat, 2022, p. 412).

In light of this, striking a balance between protecting freedom of expression and safeguarding communities from the harm caused by hate speech presents a significant challenge for experts and societies alike. Governments, organizations, and social media service providers must navigate between protecting freedom of expression and safeguarding communities from the harm caused by hate speech.

While freedom of expression is considered a fundamental pillar of democracy, this right must be accompanied by responsibility. Individuals should have the freedom to express their opinions without hindrance or harassment, according to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

However, there should be limits and restrictions on freedom of expression when it conflicts with the rights of others, poses a threat to public security, or incites hatred, discrimination, and violence. Therefore, communities, governments, and organizations must work to establish an effective legal and political framework that protects freedom of expression while providing effective mechanisms to combat and address hate speech appropriately and effectively (Mubarak, p. 118).

6-Facing hate speech in Algerian institutions :

There is no doubt that informal communication plays a significant role in enhancing and expanding official communication, as it can provide additional information to managers about their subordinates and their experiences, helping increase the manager's understanding of the situation and enhancing communication effectiveness overall. Informal communication also helps overcome difficulties and obstacles that may hinder performance and development processes, and increases employees' sense of belonging by understanding work details. Additionally, informal communication reduces factors of agitation, tension, and anxiety within the work environment, providing employees with an opportunity to express their feelings and concerns, thus facilitating achieving balance with the variables surrounding the work

atmosphere more easily and effectively than official communication alone (Abs, 1999, p. 113).

It is widely acknowledged that it is difficult for management to exercise complete control and supervision over this type of informal communication that arises between employees and evolves into unofficial relationships, especially as this type of communication has expanded beyond realistic boundaries through various artificial intelligence technologies. This makes it impossible to control the nature and content of these communications. While they may carry discrimination, hatred, or differentiation among employees on non-professional grounds, they can be directed in a way that serves the organization's objectives, focusing on points that unite employees rather than those that divide them.

Therefore, Algerian institutions must deal more seriously with these virtual spaces that have become important areas for informal communication, impacting the flow of official communications and overall work performance. It is imperative for those responsible for these institutions to deal more seriously and strictly with various artificial intelligence technologies and harness them to achieve the institutions' objectives. This may involve requesting employees to declare their accounts and applications to upper management, establishing internal groups to facilitate communication among them and guide informal communications correctly, while ensuring guarantees for the protection of human rights, especially the rights to freedom of expression and privacy.

Combating online hate speech requires a different approach from national legislation or the specific rules imposed by content management by institutions, ensuring a balance between individuals' rights to security, freedom of expression, and privacy (site: <https://masaar.net/>, (11/04/2023, 00:12).

The advancement of artificial intelligence technologies has had a tremendous positive impact on exercising the right to freedom of expression, allowing a larger

number of people to express their opinions openly. However, with the increase in types of publicly published speech, harmful speech also increases. As more individuals are exposed to receiving a greater variety of speech through social media platforms, most of them become susceptible to receiving harmful speech. It can be noted that hate speech is the most prevalent type of this harmful speech. (site: <https://masaar.net/>, (11/04/2023)).

However, freedom of expression becomes restricted under paragraph 2 of Article 20 of the International Covenant if the expression constitutes incitement to hatred. Therefore, merely calling for national, racial, or religious hatred does not become a crime unless it also constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence. In this context, combating hate speech does not mean restricting freedom of expression but rather preventing its escalation to avoid risks such as violence, aggression, physical harm, or others (Bint Mubarak, pp. 118-911).

Algerian institutions can benefit from the efforts made by various websites, networks, and applications to combat hate speech. An agreement was reached between the European Union Committee and major technology companies such as Facebook and Microsoft to adopt a code of conduct to combat illegal hate speech online. Other applications such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok joined this code in September 2020. The aim is to achieve a swift response to requests for the removal of harmful content by these companies (Al-Omari, 2021, p. 41)

For example, Facebook, the most widely used social network in Algeria previously, published guidelines for users to avoid posting any hate speech. It also indicated the removal of any content inciting hatred against protected groups present on the network, such as refraining from racial, ethnic, or origin-based insults. This includes images, usernames, bios, and more (site : [https : //ijnet.org/ar/resource](https://ijnet.org/ar/resource), (11/04/2023)).

7. CONCLUSION

Non-formal communication is an important element for the stability of an institution, and an institution cannot continue without encouraging this type of communication as it ensures the easy, flexible, and smooth exchange of information not available in formal communication. It also meets some of the psychological and social needs of employees in Algerian institutions, as individuals are inherently social and cannot live in isolation from others.

Given the extensive integration of artificial intelligence technologies in various aspects of life, where they have become important spaces for dialogue and venting away from traditional forms of surveillance present in Algerian institutions, it rings alarm bells about the transformation of non-formal communication from its true objectives into content that includes hate speech against certain categories in the institution based on tribal, geographical, or racial grounds. This involves mistreatment of some parties in the institution. Hence, it is imperative to search for mechanisms to combat hate speech in Algerian institutions, utilizing what these human-like simulated technologies have provided on one hand, and on the other hand, searching for mechanisms and methods to guide the use of these technologies in a way that serves the desired objectives of non-formal communication in Algerian institutions.

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