

## The Use of Emoji for Communications Between Role-Players in Twitter: Semiotics Analysis

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### **Abstract**

*A sign certainly has a meaning behind it, including the use of emojis. This allows someone to use an emoji to convey something. The meaning behind the use of these emojis can vary. Emoji are used in conversations between individuals and other individuals in an online conversation or in a network (online). The purpose of this research is to reveal the meaning behind the use of emojis used by role-players on Twitter. This research will discuss the delivery of certain meanings by an emoji to the recipient. The data from this study were taken from conversations between role-players on Twitter. This study uses an emoji semiotic approach with a qualitative descriptive method. The results of this study are the first use, emoji can visualize a person's emotions when exchanging messages through social media such as: (1) feelings of joy, (2) apologies and feelings of sadness, (3) satire, (4) support and praise, and (5) shame. Also, emojis are not used for a single situation or feeling. So, emoji can be used to express various kinds of feelings.*

**Keywords :** Semiotics, Emoji, Role-Players

### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of information and communication technology has many impacts on human life. One of the positive impacts obtained is the ease of long-distance communication between individuals. Communication in the network or online which is familiarly called online is very attention-grabbing. This makes it easier for people to communicate directly without having to meet face to face. Space and time are no longer a thing problem for people to communicate.

Technology can be an important aspect of human life, especially in terms of sending information between individuals. This is then clarified by saying that in the future technology will be more advanced. It can be seen clearly that currently it is possible to record events in the form of text, audio, visual or audio visual. Internet as a new media is believed to have global connectivity and unlimited access. With the internet users can interact actively with each other.

Social media is an online media, with its users can easily participate, share, and create content including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. In the current era, social media is considered as something that is very important to have. With social media, one can easily communicate with one another. According to Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, define social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and which enable the creation and exchange of "user-generated content".

One of the social media that is often used as a communication tool is Twitter. On Twitter, people can exchange messages with each other without being burdened with expensive fees. In addition, Twitter provides a timeline feature which is a place for users to write down or express their feelings, activities, and so on.

Since K-Pop entered Indonesia, a game called Role-player emerged. People play the characters they like on social media, one of which is Twitter. Role-player is a game that trains someone to play the role of the character they are playing. They can also exchange messages with each other, as well as establish relationships with fellow players, such as family, friends, and even virtual girlfriends.

Role-players often use various kinds of emoji to convey their messages. The word emoji is an English adaptation of the Japanese 文字 — the e from emoji means "picture" and emoji means "letter, character." So, the definition of emoji is, in simple terms, "word-picture". There are two main functions in the use of emoji, namely the phatic function and the emotional function.

The emojis used in exchanging messages vary. Each emoji user can convey his meaning through the emoji. Not all emoji have the same meaning when used. There are several emoji whose meaning can change according to the context of the conversation between the sender and the recipient. This causes new meanings to be created when using emojis. Semiotic analysis of emoji can be carried out because there is an understanding of the formation of the meaning of emoji symbols used by role-players on Twitter as a series of message exchanges and indicating the emotional form of its users. Signs are defined as something that can represent something else. In this case, a sign can be studied to find the true meaning contained in the sign.

Based on the semiotic triangle theory C.S Pierce shows that the emoji symbol is a sign that is directly related to the object, namely emotion that arise when chat activities take place. The emotions of role-player players by inserting emoticons that lead to the player's interpretation as a form of emotion that represents his emotions when exchanging messages.

The emoji used in exchanging messages among role-player players can represent each other's emotions. This shows that a sign can lead to interpretations for its users. The meaning of using an emoji is based on the content of the message you want to convey. Every emoji that is used must bring out the contents of the message in it.

Pierce's triangle of meaning concludes that in an interpretant, in an interpretant there is a form of meaning from all processes of achieving meaning conveyed by a form of sign, and this emoticon as a symbol that is interpreted. One of the important components contained in the interpretant is the decent sign. Decent sign is a sign that provides information about something that is in accordance with the reality of the user which is applied in the form of emoji provided by Twitter. The meaning of emoji for each user is indeed different. The emojis are presented to meet the needs of its users in conveying emotions. This is related to the emoji function, namely the emotional function.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Research is a series of scientific activities carried out to solve a problem. In scientific research, a method is needed to become the basis for research. The goal is that the research can be carried out in accordance with the things to be achieved. The research method is the method used in researching an object of research with certain techniques. In this study, researchers used qualitative methods to understand the meaning of using emojis for role-players on Twitter.

The qualitative method is a method that can be used in literary research which utilizes ways of interpretation then describe it through description. Qualitative methods focus on natural data and data in relation to the context in which they exist.

Qualitative research focuses on the ongoing process as well as the product or outcome. Researchers are primarily concerned with understanding how things happen (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990; Merriam, 1998). The purpose of qualitative research is to understand certain social situations, events, roles, groups, or interactions (Locke, Spirduso, Silverman, 1987).

This study uses semiotic analysis, so this type of research is interpretive qualitative. The interpretive qualitative type is a research method that requires the researcher to make a thorough observation of all the signs found in its use. The researcher uses the semiotic model of Charles Sanders Pierce to interpret the signs found.

The data source for this research is screenshots or screenshots of the activities of role-players on the Twitter social network taken from 5-10 May 2020. In this study the researchers selected several Twitter users who played role-players. Selection of this user is seen from how long it is playing role-player and how often he uses emojis in his daily activities.

The data collection technique in this study is using the documentation method. The documentation method is a method of collecting qualitative data by viewing or analyzing documents made by the subject himself or by others by the subject. Documentation is one way that qualitative researchers can do to get an overview from the subject's point of view through a written medium and other document written or made directly by the subject concerned.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The meaning of an emoji usage is indeed different. In its use the meaning of a symbol is determined by an agreement or accepted by the public as a sign. In exchanging messages, role-players on Twitter use several types of emoji to convey messages according to the needs of their users.

### 1. Using Emoji to Express Happiness

In communicating between fellow role-players, some people use certain emoji when they want to express their happy feelings. Usually someone will use a smiling or laughing face emoji to convey that happy feeling.



Screenshot of a conversation snippet between two players role-player above uses the emoji of a smiling face with red cheeks and closed eyes to express feelings of joy, even though the meaning conveyed is a feeling of forced pleasure. Furthermore, the sender uses a laughing face with tears coming out emoticon which shows his real feelings of joy.

However, later, it was found that there are other emojis that can be used to express happy feelings apart from laughing or smiling emojis. This can be seen through the screenshots of the conversation between the following two role-player players.



The sender uses the emoji with closed eyes, raised eyebrows, and smiling lips at the top to express that he has lived a happy or happy life. Furthermore, in the same case, someone expresses their happy feelings using another form of emoji. This can be seen through the following screenshot.



In the conversation above, the sender used a crying emoji and a fist to express his feelings of joy. The crying emoji symbolizes feeling infinitely happy and the fist emoji symbolizes that he is feeling very happy and excited. After looking at some of the examples of using emojis above, it can be concluded that, in conveying happy feelings, one cannot only use smiling or laughing emojis.

## 2. Using Emoji to Express Apology and Sadness

Someone often uses emojis when expressing their sad feelings. Usually, they use the emoji of a sad face, or a face filled with tears. This can be seen in the following snippet of conversation.



In the conversation above, person A as the sender uses a face emoji with tears streaming down to express his feelings of sadness and apology to person B. This is supported using the word "sorry" which precedes the crying emoji. Someone tends to use these emojis to convey their sad feelings. Furthermore, emoticons of two palms joined together to convey an apology were also found, as shown in the following data.



It was recently discovered that the emoji is the “High Five” or clapping emoji. However, when used, these emojis tend to be used to express apologies, regrets, and so on. Then, in the following data it can be seen the use of other emojis in expressing feelings of sadness.



In this data, the sender uses a sad face emoji to express his sad feelings. Apart from that, he also uses an emoji with a face with teary eyes. These emojis are used to describe the emotions of the sender. So, the recipient can understand the contents of the message he received.

### 3. Using Emoji to Sacrifice Someone

Emoji are also commonly used to make fun of other people. Emoji are used to subtly satirize. This can be seen through the following data.



In the conversation above, the sender used the laughing emoji with tears coming out to insinuate someone. The laughing emoji is used twice in each sentence. The repeated use of emoji also provides a deeper satirical meaning. This means that something they are talking about is very funny and deserves to be laughed at.

Apart from the laughing emoji with tears coming out, the sender also uses a closed mouth emoji which indicates someone who is holding back his laughter. Then, she also uses the red face with wavy lips emoji to give a satire to the person they are talking about.

In accordance with this data, it was found that there are three forms of emoji that can be used to satirize someone. Besides that, still there are many other forms of emoji that can be used, such as the thumbs down emoji and so on.

#### 4. Using Emojis to Give Support and Praise

In role-players games one can also give support and praise to one another. In providing this support, some people use emojis to make it easier to convey their messages. The use of emoji to provide support that is commonly found in everyday life in the form of a muscular arm emoji and others. In the following data, it was found that not only the muscular arm emoji can be used to provide support to others.



In the data above, you can see the use of blushing and lips emoji as if you want to kiss to give support to others. This gives the meaning of saying love to others.



Furthermore, in the data above, the use of the hand emoji is being clenched except for the index finger and little finger to give compliments to others. Apart from that, emojis of laughing faces with tears and fists were also used to express the compliment.

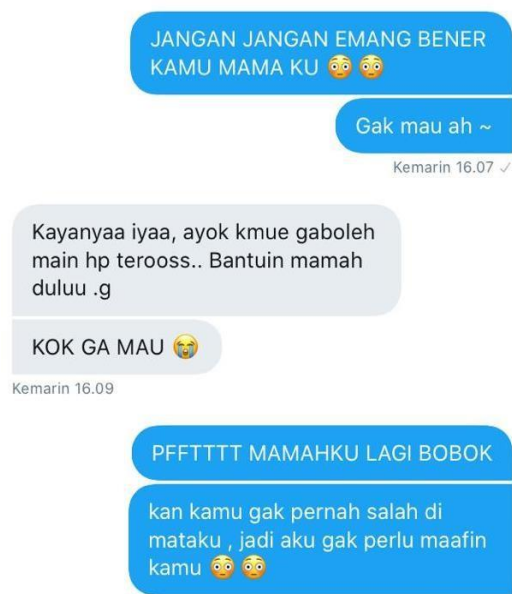




In the data above, there are other emojis that can be used to compliment others. The blushing face emoji is used to compliment the recipient. This is made clear by the word that appears before the emoji, namely the word "smart" or "smart". The word "smart" is synonymous with something good, thus it can be said that the sender is praising his interlocutor. Then he uses emojis to further clarify the meaning of the words he uses.

### 5. Using Emoji to Express Shyness

Feelings of embarrassment are usually expressed through closed face emojis. However, in the following data the sender uses other emojis to express his feelings of embarrassment.



The data above shows that someone is using the blushing face emoji to make fun of other people. The use of the emoji aims to show the shy feelings of its users. In the previous data, the emoji was used to give compliments to other people. This proves that emoji do have one meaning. However, every emoji can have different meanings according to the context and conventions of its users.

### CONCLUSION

After conducting research on the use of emoji by role-players on Twitter, several conclusions can be drawn. First, emoji can visualize a person's emotions when exchanging messages through social media such as: (1) feelings of joy, (2) apologies and feelings of sadness, (3) satire, (4) support and praise, and (5) embarrassment.

Furthermore, an emoji is not used for a single situation or feeling. So, an emoji can be used to express many kinds of feelings. As discussed in the discussion point that the

crying emoji with tears streaming down does not only mean sadness but can also mean happiness. In addition, the emoji with a red face does not only mean to express feelings of embarrassment but can also mean a compliment.

Besides being used to Emoji is also used to visualize one's emotions, it is also used to emphasize message content. This has been explained in the discussion points, that each emoji which is used must emphasize the contents of the message that follows it.

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