SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS ON THE FREQUENTLY-USED EMOJIS IN A WHATSAPP GROUP

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This thesis is to fulfill the requirement for the degree of Sarjana (SI) IN English Department, state Islamic Institue of Kediri.

Kediri, May 15th, 2019

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    Setelah diperbaiki materi dan susunannya, sesuai dengan beberapa petunjuk dan tuntunan yang diberikan dalam sidang munaqosah yang dilaksanakan pada tanggal 25 Juli 2019, kami dapat menerima dan menyetujui hasil perbaikannya.

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MOTTO

The Key To Success Is The Always Spoken Prayer From The Best Mother In

The Silence Of A Third Of The Night.

DEDICATION

With all of my love, Idedicated my thesis to:

- My beloved Allah SWT and prophet Muhammad SAW who always guide me and take care of me to be a good person
- My beloved father (Sudarto) and my mother (Tutik) who always has honesty sincerity to grow me up, educate, accompany and pray for me until getting success and their greatest live and support for me at all until I can accomplish this script.
- All my family which I cannot mention one by one. They who love me very much and because of their help, support and big love, so I can finish my paper well. Thank you are always beside me in certain condition.
- My best someone (Andri H.S). Thank you for your giving support.
- All of my friends KKN 81. Thank you for an inpiration.

ABSTRACT

Pramastuti, Dhifa Setyagram. 2019. *Semiotic analysis on The Frequently-used Emojis in a WhatsApp Group,* Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah, State Islamic Institute of (IAIN) Kediri. Advisor: (1) Bahruddin, S.S, M.Pd. (2) H. Burhanudin Syaifulloh, M.Ed.

Key Terms: Semiotic Analysis, Emojis, WhatsApp Group

Semiotic analysis is the study about sign. This study focuses on semiotic analysis using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory. This research was conducted to investigate the interpretant types and the meaning categories that contained of frequently-used emojis, particulary in a WhatsApp Group.

The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This research uses five emojis that frequently-used in a WhatsApp group, which have many meaning to be analyzed as the data. And to collect the data, the researcher use documentation by screenshots of community service program (KKN) chatting group starting from the twelve March 2019 to the twenty-eighth of March 2019 the in WhasApp application. In the stages of data analysis, the analysis technique used in this study is the Analysis of Filling System, where data from observations will be analyzed by making certain categories or certain domains.

The results of the study are related to the interpretant types and the categories of meaning contained in the emojis. The interpretant types of frequently-used emojis are quip, request, happy, curious, obedient, arrogant, ask, rejecting, clarify, order, shy, reinforce the contents of the message, and shock. The meaning categories frequently-used of emojis are real meaning and fake meaning.

ACKOWLEDMENT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, the research question, the objective of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, the significance of the study, and also the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Communication is an activity that is very important and becomes a basic need for humans in modern times like today. Where in communicating, we can exchange message with other people in different places. We as communicators or senders try to convey the message we want to convey to the other person or communicant. On the other hand someone who as a communicant or recipient of a message tries to understand the contents of the message we receive by using language as one of the communication tools in it. However, it turns out that it is not only using language but consciously or not someone uses emotions, feelings, body movements, and facial expressions in communicating via SMS *(short message service)* found on a telephon.

SMS *(Short message service)* can be inserted symbols that can describe the emotions or feelings felt by the sender of the message. The combination of symbols that are able to represent emotions or feelings is known as "emoticons". Besides being useful for expressing emotions or feelings, emoticons also function as reinforcement of the contents of the

message conveyed. However, as time went on, emoticons that initially were a combination of symbols such as colon ":", less open "(" closing brackets ")", strips "-", and so on have been developed by several Japanese technology companies as symbols that have more interesting visualization. These symbols are called emojis.

Emojis and emoticons have the same function, namely to express emotions or feelings when communicating. The difference is the visualization of images and variations of emojis more than emoticons and emojis themselves are usually used on instant messages that are supported by the internet network. The internet as a new media turns out to make people more often use instant messaging services in it than SMS *(Short Messages Service)*. This is evidenced by the emergence of various social media and instant messaging services (chat) such as Friendster, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Path, Line, Yahoo Messenger, Blackberry Messenger, WhatsApp, etc.

WhatsApp is one of the chat applications that is quite popular and widely used by the public which allows users to share messages and images. Besides that, WhatsApp is also supported by various emoji features to strengthen emotions in the message content when chatting. But sometimes certain emojis can function differently according to the type of relationship or the context of the sentence. And the functions or meanings contained in emoticons can be examined and analyzed using the theories and concepts associated with them, one of which is the theory of semiotics.

Based on the description above, the researcher choose the title "SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS ON THE FREQUENTLY-USED EMOJIS IN A WHATSAPP GROUP" to find out the interpretant types and the meaning categories that contained of frequently-used emojis when chatting in a WhatsApp group application.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study. The research question can be formulated as follows:

1. What interpretant types of emojis are frequently-used in a WhatsApp group?

2. How many meaning categories of emojis are frequently-used in a WhatsApp group?

C. Objective of the Study

Based on the research question, the objective of this study is to find out.

1. To find out the interpretant types are frequently-used emojis in a WhatsApp group.

2. To find out the meaning categories of emojis are frequently-used in a WhatsApp group?

D. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study is the use of emojis in chatting activities in a WhatsApp group application, which was taken from twelve March 2019 to twenty eighth March 2019. Emojis were selected based on the types of emoji that is frequently-used on each post when chatting in a WhatsApp

group especially the types of smiley emojis. The researcher focuses on semiotic to be analyzed. The researcher tries to find meaning and interpretant of semiotic triangle Charles Sanders Peirce, which the interpretant itself is a response or reaction to a sign that is produced.

E.   Significance of the Study

Through this research, it is expected that the selection of emojis must be in accordance with the contents of the message sent, using emojis should not be arbitrary and must be in accordance with the emojis felt at that time. Because if you use it carelessly it will trigger a misunderstanding of the meaning of emojis and will cause conflicts between fellow users of the WhatsApp application.

F.   Definition of Key Terms

The researcher provides meaning on every word that she writes in her research. This study aims to understanding at the main point of every key term that is commonly used by researcher in this research. There are some key terms:

1.   Semiotic

Semiotic is the study of sign systems. It explores how words and other sign make meaning. In semiotic, a sign is anything that stands in for something other than itself. This lesson focuses primarily on linguistic sign. Everyone is a semiotician, because everyone is constantly unconsciously interpreting the meaning of signs around them.

2.   **Emojis**

Literally emoji comes from Japanese, "e" which means image and "moji" which means letters. In other words, emojis is a character icon in writing. Emojis was created by Shigetaka Kurita in 1990 with the initial goal of beautifying the message. No different from other character icon such as kaomoji and emoticons, emojis are pictorial symbols that resemble human, animal, facial, holiday, and other facial expressions. Emojis can show how the message is delivered, with indicators as follows, namely feeling indicators, non-verbal indicators, and illocutionary indicators. When inserted in an emoji sentence it functions as a linguistic aspect that shows how the message is delivered.

3.   **WhatsApp**

WhatsApp is a type of technology that is commonly used on specific mobile phones and computers. Since the smart phones became popular, many messaging services were launched but whatsApp has become the most popular among all. This application is highly addictive and can create a great impact on regular users and, apart from that, becomes difficult to control and cure.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This chapter provides explanation related theories used in this study, such as definition of semiotic, emojis, and WhatsApp.

A. Semiotic

Semiotics is the study of signs. The concept of this sign sees that meaning arises when there are associative relationships between the signified and the signifier. Sign is a unit of a marker (signifier) with an idea or sign (signified). In other words, markers are "meaningful sounds" or "meaningful strokes".

The study of signs (Chandler, 2007) is a simple definition for everyone. Sign is the basis of all communication (Littlejohn, 2006). Humans by using mediation signs can communicate with others. Semiotics is the study of signs and is the creation of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the American pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce. Initially proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) in the Course at General Linguistics (1915) with the term 'Semiology', sign science (Kull et al., 2015).

Ferdinand de Saussure is well known as the father of modern linguistics. His important thoughts refers not in his detailed work in linguistics, but in his general view of representation and his model of language that shaped the semiotic approach to the problem of representation

in a wide variety of cultural fields. For Saussure, the production of meaning depends on language. Language is a system of signs. ['Sound, images, written words, painting, photographs function as signs within language.

Saussure analyzes the sign into two further elements. The form (the actual word) and the idea or concept in our head with the form is associate. Saussure called the first element, the Signifier, and the second element the corresponding concept it triggers off in the head – the signified1. Every time the signifier can hear or read or see it (e.g. the word or image of walkman), it correlates with the signified (the concept of portable cassette player in your head).

The term 'Semiotics' comes from Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) and is the dominant term used in sign studies. The term 'sign' in semiotics is different from what we understand in everyday use. Charles Sanders Peirce describes the semiology model in a manner simple, meaningful triangle.

Sign

Interpretant ⟶ object
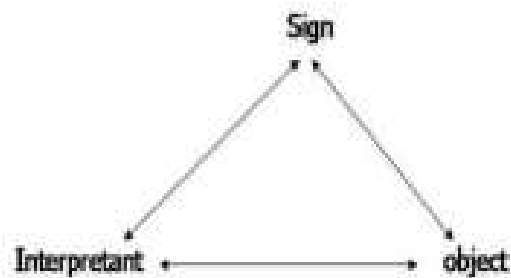
Charles Sanders Pearce was an American philosopher, he was born in 1839. He became famous because of his theory of sign. According to Pierce, sign "is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity". Charles Sanders Peirce (Dole, 2014) formulates how the emergence of a meaning based on sign. Pierce held that there are exactly three basic semiotic elements. First is Sign or Representament (qualisign, sinsign, and legisign), second is an Object (icon, index, and symbol), and third is Interpretant (rheme, dicisign, and argument).

1. Based on ground (something that makes a sign work). Peirce classifies the Ground into three things:

    1. Qualisign

       Qualisign is the quality of a sign. For example, words that are hard, rough, soft, and sweet.

    2. Sinsign

       Sinsign is the existence and actuality of an object or event that is in a sign. Suppose the word "flood" in the sentence "flooded" is an event that explains that the flood was caused by rain.

    3. Legisign

       Legisign is a norm contained in a sign, for example traffic signs that indicate things that may or may not be done by humans when driving.

1. Based on the object

    a. An icon is relationships between sign and object or references that are similar in character (showing a resemblance). It can also be defined as

a physical object (two or three dimensions) that resembles what it presents. For example someone's photo, a horse statue which is an icon of a horse and also a map.

b. An index is a sign in which the relationship between a sign and its reference arises because there is a closeness to existence or a sign that has a causal relationship with what it represents. So the index is a sign that has a direct relationship (causality) with the object. An example is smoke is an index of the presence of fire, footprints on the ground is an index sign of people passing through the place, and a signature is an index of the presence of someone who incised the signature.

c. A symbol is sign based on convention, regulation or agreement that are mutually agreed upon. A new symbol can be understood if someone already understands the meaning that has been agreed before. For example: Garuda Pancasila for the Indonesian nation is a bird that has a symbol that is rich in meaning. But for those who have different cultural backgrounds, such as Eskimos, Garuda Pancasila will be considered an ordinary bird that is equated with other eagle-like birds.

2. Based on Interpretant

a. Rheme

Rheme is a sign that allows interpreted in different meanings. For example, if a person has red eyes, he may be drowsy, or maybe he has eye pain, irritation, or he may just wake up or even be drunk.

b. Dicent sign or dicisign

Dicent sign or dicisign is a sign that is in accordance with the facts
and facts. For example, there are a lot of children in a village street so
that there are lots of children on the road and lots of children are
careful. Other examples, for example roads that are prone to accidents,
are installed with signs that are prone to accidents.

c. Argument

An argument is a sign that contains a reason for something. For
example the smoking ban at gas stations is because SPBU is a
flammable place.

B. Emojis

Emojis can be described as graphic symbols or ideogram that not
only shows facial expression but also wider concepts and ideas such as
celebrations, weathers, vehicles and buildings, food and drinks, animals and
plants, emotions, feelings, and activities (Chairunnisa & A.S., 2017). Emoji
can also depicting emotional form in non-verbal language (Derks, Bos, &
Von Grumbkow, 2008). Non-verbal information is the piece of information
that the human brain processes and recognises as an emotional interaction
when perceiving an emoji (Yuasa, Saito, & Mukawa, 2011). People read
these picture characters as emotional information and not words. Thus,
texting with emoji is as important as texting with words to clearly articulate
the meaning of messages via digital communication. Interestingly, linguists
have found that individuals who have been prevented from using gestures

while talking become less voluble in speaking (Hakami, 2017). Basically, emoji in digital communication helps represent the human gestures, voice tones and physical expressions people do when communicating vocally, whether using telephones or talking face to face.

C. **WhatsApp**

WhatsApp was created by Brian Acton and Jan Koum in 2009 (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014). both former employees at Yahoo!. The company is based in Mountain View, California and employs 55 people. As of October 2014, Whatsapp is the most globally popular messaging app more than 600 million users. The main objective behind of multimedia easier and faster than short messages service (SMS). It is a cross platform mobile messenger that works on an internet data plan. It is cheaper because all that is needed is user"s monthly subscription.

WhatsApp,started in the year 2009, with the tag line "Simple. Apart from making its users getting connected with each other, it also helps them to create groups, send unlimited images, video and audio messages. Studies have proved that WhatsApp is the most popular instant messenger service used by youth today. Young people who gives more importance to friendship, social lives and family relationships make use of WhatsApp in a large scale. The popularity of WhatsApp among youth has brought a huge profit among service providers since it works on internet data plan. The reason why WhatsApp is so popular among youth is because, it allows them to send unlimited texts to their friends and family members without any cost

other than their internet data plan that they already uses in their smart phones. The application is so easy to use after downloading. It shows you who all are using WhatsApp in your contacts and also helps to invite their friends who are yet to download and use. Then they can start messaging, sharing audio files, video files, updating status, etc.

D. Previous Study

There is study which relevant with this study. The researcher found two research in the form of journaling and thesis. The first journal was written by Gradiyanto Giovanni Sakti T, Muh. Zein Abdullah, and Marsia Sumule. This jounal is an indonesia language journal. The title is "Makna Emotikon Dalam Komunikasi Antar Pribadi Pengguna Media Sosial Line". The journal uses the same theory with this thesis namely Charles Shanders Pearce's semiotics theory. The object is slightly different from this thesis, namely emoticons and emojis. The different between both of them lies only in the type of social media namely Line and WhatsApp.

The second previous study is a thesis about "A semiotic analysis on the novel (The five people you meet in heaven)". It was written by Maulana Mansyur. It also uses Charles Shanders Pearce's theoritical framework of Semiotics. But this thesis analysis a novel and focused on The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom and limited merely on analyzing the symbolic of Eddie's travel into heaven in The Five People You Meet in Heaven. So, this is just the theory that is the same with this thesis.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the method that used by the writer in doing this research. The research methodology consists of research design, data source, the instrument, data collection, and data analysis. To make them clearer, the researcher divides them one by one in the following:

A. **Research Design**

The design of this research is descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research focuses on the processes that take place and also products or results. Researchers are primarily to understand what is happening (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990: Merriam, 1998).

Definition of qualitative research is keywords descriptive and verbal data keywords, and behavior that can pay attention to the people studied. The qualitative learning method used by this study aims to find out what happened from the experience studied.

This study uses the semiotic method, so this type of research is interpretive qualitative where the researcher makes in-depth observations of various aspects of the conversation using WhatsApp. The researcher used Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic model to interpretant the signs or symbols used in the WhatsApp application.

B.   Data Source

The source of data in this study is a group chat between community service program (KKN) friends on the WhatsApp application. The members are from twelve students from various study programs or majors at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) of Kediri. Chat activities are take from the 12 March 2019 to the twenty-eighth of March 2019.

C.   Research Instrument

Research instrument according to Suharsimi Arikunto (2006: 149) is a tool for researchers to collect data. The instrument in this study was the researchers themselves. The researcher as instrument can be directly related and able to understand and assess various forms of interaction in the field. According to Moleong (2007: 168) The position of the researcher in qualitative research is that she is also a planner, executor, data collection, analysis, data interpreter, in the end she becomes the reporter of the results of her research.

D.   Data Collection

Data collection techniques in this study are

1. Documentation

The researcher retrieves the data by screenshots of each post on the chat group in the WhatsApp application from twelve March 2019 to twenty eighth March 2019.

2. Observation

    The researcher did a direct observation on the object of the study by observing the types of emojis that were frequently-used when the chat took place on the WhatsApp group.

E.   **Data Analysis**

    This study uses semiotic analysis. The data analysis technique in this study uses interpretive descriptive method, which is to examine in detail the data that has been collected and then interpreted, the collected data information is analyzed by interpretive descriptive technique that is to be interpreted on the object based on data obtained then conclusions are taken. The researcher will pay attention to the emojis that are often used and the emotions depicted in the emoji, then make interpretations and then understand and interpret them based on the context of the sentence that the sender wrote.

    The semiotic analysis of this study uses Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic theory known as the triangle of meaning, namely signs, objects, and interpretants. In the stages of data analysis, the analysis technique used in this study is the Analysis of Filling System, which is the data of observations will be analyzed by making certain categories. (Kriyantono, 2006: 195). Categories in analyzing WhatsApp emojis, researchers use three stages of analysis, namely:

1. Sign   : Emotion depicted

2. Objects   : Emojis

3. Interpretation: Gives meaning then interprets the data.

F.   Triangulation

According to Blaikie, triangulation is one of the method in qualitative research that used by the researcher to check and establish validity in their studies. Denzin states that there are four types of triangulation as a method used in qualitative research : data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation.

In this study, the researcher use investigator triangulation. Investigator triangulation involves using several different investigators/evaluators in this project. The researcher asked Mr. Burhanuddin Syaifulloh, M.Ed to be her evaluator to re-check the result of this study.