SOCIO-SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF EMOJIS AND EMOTICONS IN THE VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES OF *WHATSAPP* AND *FACEBOOK*

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has been written by me and it is a report of my research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for higher Degree. All quotations are indicated and sources of information specifically acknowledged as a means of references.

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CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled "**Socio-Semiotic Analysis of Emojis and Emoticons in the Virtual Communities of *Whatsapp* and *Facebook***" meets the regulations governing the award of Master of Arts in English Language of the School of Postgraduate Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge

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DEDICATION

To all lovers ❣️ and users of emojis 😂 and emoticons (ˆ ▽ ˆ)

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ABSTRACT

This research through the lens of socio semiotics reveals the revolution of the old language form to how the novel emoji and emoticons are employed in the virtual communities of *Facebook* and *Whatsapp*. The term "emoji" is a loanword from Japanese, a portmanteau that blends "e 'picture' and moji 'letter, character" and identifies "a small digital image or icon used to express an idea or emotion in electronic communication." The word ''emoticon,'' a construction of the words ''emotion'' and ''icon,'' refers to graphic representations of facial expressions, which often follow utterances in written computer-mediated communication (CMC). Emoticons may be produced by ASCII symbols (:-)) or by ''pictograms.'' The focus of social semiotics is no longer interested with the knowledge of the sign; it is now primarily concerned with how people are using 'semiotic resources' in their daily communicative endeavours. The study attempts to investigate various communicative functions ranging from indicating emotions, fulfilling a requested task, indicating approval or disapproval among others. Furthermore, the visual image of emoji which exerts a strong impact upon its readers and users through colour and visual grammar is discussed. The relevance of emojis in chats cannot be overemphasized because there is a correlation with the emoji and the conversation. i.e the chats. The researcher adopts Kress Gunther's theory of multimodality as framework; a theory that captures the use of combination of different semiotic modes in a social context in order to generate meaning. In addition, this study employed quantitative and qualitative methods in collection of data. The data were collected from some *Whatsapp* groups and *Facebook* pages i.e the virtual communities for analysis. This research shows that the use of emojis and emoticons is a huge shift in nonverbal communication. Hence, emojis are powerful tools to demonstrate the freedom of expression and the nonverbal cues in our daily textual language. They have taken control over nonverbal communication and are changing our language and shifting vocabulary in terms of how we communicate to others. The researcher therefore recommends that more researchers especially those in Nigeria and Africa go into this novel exploration of emojis and emoticons.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The 'face with tears of joy' emoji became the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Word of the Year in 2015. The OED website states that it made the decision to give the Word of the Year distinction to an emoji because use of emoji not only increased considerably in 2015 with the 'face with tears of joy' emoji accounting for a fifth of all emoji used but was also used broadly across social groups. This trend saw emoji used increasingly in various facets. The question of whether emoji are a complement to the written word or a substitute is an important one for what has been described as the world's fastest growing language (Cioletti, 2016).

The focus of social semiotics is no longer interested with the knowledge of the sign; it is now primarily concerned with how people are using 'semiotic resources' in their daily communicative endeavours. Semiotic resources are the actions, materials and artefacts we use for communicative purposes, whether produced physiologically for example, with our vocal apparatus, the muscles we use to make facial expressions and gestures or technologically for example, with pen and ink, or computer hardware and software together with the ways in which these resources can be organized. Semiotic resources have a meaning potential, based on their past uses, and a set of affordances based on their possible uses, and these will be actualized in concrete social contexts where their use is subject to some form of semiotic regime (van Leeuwen, 2005:285). This captures the functionality and elements of emoji as used in the virtual communities of *Whatsaap* and *Facebook*. The dynamic elements of emojis such as layout, colours, flashing technology

and graphics are able to be harnessed by users and in the long run play a significant part in creating a platform of reference that qualifies them as interactive icons. The emoji icons provide users with a signifier for some elements of functionality. That is to say, that by just looking at them, they signify to the user, some form of functionality. The key aspects of these icons lie in their ability to communicate their purpose to the users. The affordances that emoji provide are like pictograms. According to Bertin(1983) affordances of graphic medium such as colour, line, shape, etc. relate to our perceptual capacity as ways of relaying and communicating information. For example it is easy to identify pictograms due to a loose association of the connection of its objects and cultural values Bertin(86,88).

Emojis are omnipresent we use them while chatting with friends on WhatsApp. Scrolling through Facebook and other virtual communities, you will encounter many faces, hearts, camera or thumbs up icons. 'Emoji Competence' considers this issue, telling us that there are two types of emoji text, adjunctive, where emoji are used alongside text, and substitutive, where emoji are used wholly in place of text. The two examples given by the author in fact serve as illustrations as to why emoji use with or without accompanying words does not (yet) seem sufficient to produce texts that are equivalent in terms of meaning to the written word alone. The first (36) is an entire, substitutive, emoji text entitled 'My birth story'. The author points out that it is generally intelligible, but then goes on to misinterpret it, stating that it tells of the writer's feelings 'when she was born' (38). This isn't the case the phrase 'My birth story' is understood to refer to a woman's story of when she gave birth (76).

1.1.1 History of Emoticons

The word “emoticon” is derived from the combination of two English words, “emotion” - emotion and “Icon” - icon. Text emoticons are often automatically replaced with small, corresponding pictures called emoticons. This practice is commonly employed to express moods when communicating on web forums, in instant messaging and online games. Emoticons are in use since 19th century when they were used in everyday, humorous written expression.

The first emoticon, ‘the smiley’, was created by Harvey Ball in 1963, after which the symbol was trade-marked in London in 1968, and it became more and more popular. It was used to decorate t-shirts, cups, buttons, stickers and other objects. These objects became very popular in the United States. At the beginning of the 1990s the icon became the symbol of acid house music culture. The icon was often displayed also on ecstasy pills (Bódi and Veszelszki, 2006).

Emoticons for a smiley face :-) and sad face:-(appear in the first documented use in digital form. Certain complex character combinations can only be accomplished in double-byte languages, giving rise to especially complex forms, sometimes known by their romanized Japanese name of kaomoji. The use of emoticons can be traced back to the 17th century, drawn by a Slovak notary to indicate his satisfaction with the state of his town's municipal financial records in 1635, but they were commonly used in casual and humorous writing. Digital forms of emoticons on the Internet were included in a proposal by Scott Fahlman of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in a message on 19 September 1982.

1.1.2 History of Emoji

The etymology of the term emoji (ē-mō-jē/plural emoji, emojis) comes from within the Japanese language, where e stands for picture/illustration and moji for character. An emoji is defined as a pictographic depiction of any small image, symbol or icon used within a digital text conversation in order to express the emotional state of the writer, enabling the writer to succinctly convey information in a playful manner. In the beginning, there were emoticons. For the most part, these came of age as the :-) and :-(and 8-D of chatroom conversations in the 1990s. These primitive gestures represented an important part of early net speak: You could convey sarcasm by tacking on ;-) at the end of your message, or share your ambivalence with the ¯(ツ)_/¯ face.

The first emoji were created in 1999 by Japanese artist Shigetaka Kurita. Kurita worked on the development team for "i-mode," an early mobile internet platform from Japan's main mobile carrier, DOCOMO. Kurita wanted to design an attractive interface to convey information in a simple, succinct way: for example, an icon to show the weather forecast rather than spelling out "cloudy." So Kurita sketched a set of 12- by 12-pixel images that could be selected from a keyboard-like grid within the i-mode interface, then sent on mobiles and pages as their own individual characters. Kurita's original 176 emoji now part of the permanent collection at New York's Museum of Modern Art privileged symbols over faces, because DOCOMO's goal was to find new ways to express information. There were characters to show the weather (sun, clouds, umbrella, snowman), traffic (car, tram, airplane, ship), technology (landline, cell phone, TV, GameBoy), and all the phases of the moon. But those characters weren't purely informational: For the first time, emoji offered a way to add emotional subtext to a

message. “I understand” might sound cold or passive on its own, but add ❤ and the message offered a sense of warmth and sympathy. It was the beginning of a new visual language.

Kurita sought to ease the communication by conveying information in a simple, succinct manner using pictograms instead of typographic characters. Taking inspiration from marks used in weather forecasts, manga, and other sources, he designed a total of 176 icons, created on a 12 x 12 px grid that incorporated not just facial expressions, but other symbols (hearts, fist bumps, peace signs, etc.) capable of adding emotional subtext to a message. While the model was instantly replicated by other Japanese telecom companies, it took almost 11 years (1999–2010) for the symbols to be standardized and incorporated into Unicode, which is a computing industry standard for the consistent encoding, representation and handling of text expressed in most of the world's writing systems. In 2011, Apple started officially supporting emojis within iOS by adding a dedicated set of icons within its own keyboard, and it was followed by Google two years after. With the official adoption of Unicode and the support of these two tech giants, emoji was finally going to become its own universal language.

The difference between the emoji and the emoticon is that the former is now a fully-fledged picture, no longer requiring a combination of keys. At the same time, emojis are not only facial expressions, they are also animals, food, fireworks, buildings, or cars.

1.1.3 Forms of Emoji

The bloom of emojis has changed conventional communication schemes that only use plain texts, making the conversations between two users much more vivid and interesting. Moreover, emojis are informative and flexible that could even express some profound

meanings beyond words. At this juncture, it is important to say that emoji exist in various genres, including facial expressions, common objects, places, symbols, types of weather, animals etc. They are frequently used in modern text communication. Nonetheless, as graphics with nuanced details, emoji may be open to interpretation as such, emojis have developed various graphic forms. According to Emojipedia, emojis are generally divided into several forms. These forms are in five categories, namely: people category, nature category, objects category, food and drink category and symbols category. The category of people includes emojis representing people, facial expressions, and various body parts. The nature category includes emojis depicting animals, plants and water. The object category encompasses those depicting objects such as transportation, cloth, materials used in celebration, etc. The food and drink category include emojis representing different kinds of food and drink. The last category which is symbols includes emojis representing symbols such as check marks, signs, flags etc. These forms were found to serve innumerable functions such as indicating intensity of emotions, displaying enthusiasm and excitement, signifying insistence, showing solidarity, adding emphasis, highlighting a certain part of an utterance or depicting something. It is therefore key to note that forms of emojis makes the description of emoji clearer. It makes it easier to delineate emoji according to the category it falls.

1.1.4 Virtual community: An Overview

Howard Rheingold stands at the forefront of the field of study into virtual communities since his very successful book, *The Virtual Community* was published in 1993 Mason(1). In "The Virtual Community," Rheingold defines virtual communities as "social aggregations that emerge from the [Internet] when enough people carry on those public

discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (5). He suggests that computer-based communication has introduced a new form of human social life called "virtual communities" -- groups of people linked by their participation in computer networks. People in virtual communities share many of the characteristics of people in ordinary communities, Rheingold says, yet they have no face-to-face contact, are not bound by the constraints of time or place and use computers to communicate with one another. Virtual community is a social network of individuals who interact through specific social media, potentially crossing geographical and political boundaries in order to pursue mutual interests or goals. Some of the most pervasive virtual communities are online communities operating under social networking services. These individuals in Virtual communities communicate without physical collocation.

Preece says a virtual community is a multi-disciplinary concept, which is difficult to define, thus resulting in many definitions depending upon the perspective from which it is defined (3) which may be multi-disciplinary, sociology, technology, business, economic and e-commerce. From the multidisciplinary perspective, Preece defines virtual communities as consisting of people, shared purpose, policies and computer systems. Whittaker, Issacs and O'Day (137) identifies core attributes of virtual communities as:

i. A shared goal, interest, need, or activity which is the primary reason for belonging to the community;
ii. Repeated, active participation, and often, intense interactions, strong emotional ties, and shared activities among participants;
iii. Access to shared resources, and policies determining the access to those resources;

iv. Reciprocity of information, support, and services among members; and

v. Shared context of social conventions, language, and protocols.

Drawing from the above definition Gupta and Kim (2680) buttresses that virtual communities share four concepts namely: community, location, bonding and shared objectives and purpose.

i. Community – Community refers to the group of people in the virtual community.

ii. Unlike traditional communities (neighbourhood, town or region based) members in the virtual communities are not physically bound together. Virtual communities are more concerned with human relationships like in relational communities (hobby clubs or religious groups).

iii. Location – Virtual community can be conceived of as a place where people can

iv. develop and maintain social and economic relationships and explore new opportunities Wang et al(71). Virtual communities are places where discussions about commitment, identity, conflict resolution, tensions between the collectives and the individual, and negotiation of community boundaries are conducted.

v. Bonding - The people in virtual communities have a notion of membership (formal or informal) and they form personal relationships with others in the community and sometimes they become addicted to the community. Such commitment to community is the notion of bonding.

vi. Shared objective/purpose – Virtual communities are formed around a central purpose which may range from mere enjoyment (fantasy) to information /

knowledge sharing, building relationship or transacting Armstrong and Hagel in Gupta and Kim (2680).

The two virtual communities which this research will concern itself with are; Whatsapp and Facebook. The two virtual communities have billions of users. Indeed, the social network sites have been playing a critical role in English language change research through CMC. Facebook is another channel for language change researchers since multimedia features and personal preferences of members can be disclosed beside the several textual genres (Shaw, 2008) in Khansa (2).

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. It is a messenger application that has a variety of functions, like text messages, images, audio files, video files, and links to web addresses (Bouhnik &Deshen, 2014). It is a freeware, cross-platform and end-to-end encrypted instant messaging application for smartphones/ tablets and also can be used in web. It uses the Internet to make voice calls, video calls, one to one video calls; send text messages, images, GIF, videos, documents, user location, audio files, phone contacts and voice notes to other users using standard mobile numbers. It also incorporates a feature called Status, which allows users to upload photos and videos to a 24-hours-lifetime feed that, by default, are visible to all contacts. In detail, *WhatsApp* Messenger has the following collaborative features (Bere, 2012):

i. Multimedia: It allows the user to exchange videos, text messages, images and voice notes.

ii. Group Chat: It supports the interaction of up to 50 group members.

iii. Unlimited Messaging: The number of messages you can share on *WhatsApp* is unlimited. The application uses 3G/EDGE internet data plan or Wi-Fi to ensure continuous data transmission across platforms.

iv. Cross Platform Engagements: Users with different devices (personal digital assistants, Smart phones, Galaxy tablets) can message one another through various media (text messages, pictures, videos, voice notes).

v. Offline Messaging: Messages are saved automatically when the device is off or outside coverage area.

vi. No Charges involved: there are no charges involved in using *WhatsApp* as it uses same internet data plan which is used for email or web browsing.

vii. Pins and Users Name: *WhatsApp* user need not to remember passwords or username as it works via phone numbers and integrates with users' address books.

WhatsApp has become highly addictive and can create a great impact on regular user, especially students (Bansal& Joshi, 2014). Bere (2013) examined the use of *WhatsApp* in a South African university and he stated that the students gave the positive feedback and claimed that it was an easier way to communicate with their teachers and the rest of the class and that it was also fun. The research conducted by Amry (2014) demonstrated the effectiveness of *WhatsApp* social networking in comparison with face-to-face learning in the classroom. Overall, *WhatsApp* has become an important aspect of students; live and has become a shared platform that enhances accessibility, encourages cooperation, and intensifies motivation to take an active part in academic assignments (Bansal& Joshi, 2014; Bere, 2013).

This application is highly addictive and can create a great impact on regular users and, apart from that, becomes difficult to control and cure.

WhatsApp messenger functionality has recently been improved upon. It is available on Blackberry, Nokia Symbian 60, Windows phone, Android and iPhones. For users to get started, enter the telephone number of the device into the App, it then sorts through the contacts on the phone to figure out who else also has the application already installed. Users can then invite other contacts and start sending messages to those the application discovers.

People often press their phones while walking, in buses, on their beds etc., they are chatting on *WhatsApp*. It is one of the first ten chat applications in the world today. Thousands of chatting messages, photo, video and audio attachments are done via *WhatsApp.* The development of digital technology has facilitated easier communication between people and organizations. *WhatsApp* is used for various purposes like commercial purposes, teaching of students, friendship interactions among others. It allows direct interactions.

WhatsApp was created by Brian Acton and Jan Koum in 2009 (Yeboah et al., 2014). The main objective behind its creation is to make communication and the distribution 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; all that is needed is user's monthly subscription. Otemuyiwa (2017)

The communicative repertoire of the human species has been extended recently with these emoji and emoticons. Today the genre has attained a substantial patronage especially in virtual communities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This research brings to our awareness that there is now a shift in the language system as a result of the introduction of emojis and emoticons and many people find it easier to express themselves without being wordy. Written language has not adequately provide the convenience needed to communicate in the virtual communities using the pictorial representation of feelings and emotions.

1.3 Research Questions

This research answers the following questions relevant to the study.

1. What are the forms of emoticons and emojis used in *Whatsapp* and *Facebook*?
2. What communicative functions does emoticons and emojis serve on *Whatsapp* and *Facebook*?
3. What type of utterances precedes emojis?
4. How can emoticons and emojis be used to reveal emotions in message interpretation?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This research carries out a *Discourse Analysis of Emoji and Emoticons in the Virtual Communities of Whatsapp and Facebook* and the specific objectives are;

1. To identify the forms of emoticons and emoiis used in two virtual communities.
2. To examine the type of communicative functions emoticons and emojis serve on *Whatsapp* and *Facebook.*
3. To reveal what type of utterances are followed by emoticon and emojis
4. To establish the emotional dimensions and roles in message interpretation of emojis/emoticons.

1.5 Scope of Study

This research will not account for emoticons and emojis used as display pictures or in chats but will limit itself to emoticons and emojis used in the virtual communities of *Whatsapp* and *Facebook*. It will state the meaning and communicative functions of emoticons and emojis employed amongst members of these communities. The graphical interpretations of emotions and emojis are universal for every Internet user and member in these communities. Hence members grossly use emoticons/emojis during conversation because it is faster to type an emojis than to write a whole message or its abbreviation.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This work will help intending researchers in the discourse of virtual communities and also members of virtual communities to clear ambiguities, save time during communication and for further exploration of emoticons and emojis since they reinforce some emotions that could not be conveyed otherwise in written medium. It will enhance the knowledge of the members of the community on various communicative functions of emoticons and emojis. If these visual inputs (emoticons and emojis) continue to be incorporated into virtual communities at such pace as they do now, they will soon be seen as necessary part of utterance. This research is also expected to be of great value to further research into this new area of emoticons and emojis. Emoticons and emojis have developed different forms and meanings, and a growing number of forms accompany different virtual communities. They represent a multifunctional semiotic resource available to community members, who can use them both to contextualize discourse and to organize social relationships.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Text Linguistics

Text linguistics is the study of text as a product (text grammar) or as a process (theory of text). The text-as-a-product approach is focused on the text cohesion, coherence, topical organization, illocutionary structure and communicative functions; the text-as-a-process perspective studies the text production, reception and interpretation (cf. Dolník and Bajzíková 1998). Text can be understood as an instance of (spoken or written) language use (an act of parole), a relatively self-contained unit of communication. As a ´communicative occurrence´ it meets seven criteria of textuality (the constitutive principles of textual communication): cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality, and three regulative principles of textual communication: efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness (cf. de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981, Malmjaer 1991). Text linguistics (cf. De Beaugrande & Dressler 1981, Carstens 1997) is "... devoted to describing how texts are created and understood" (Donnelly 1994:18) and in so doing studies the "... defining properties of texts - what constitutes their textuality or texture..." (Crystal 1992:387).

2.1.1 Text

Discourse analysts analyze 'texts' and 'conversations'. But what is a 'text'? Text is a piece of naturally occurring spoken, written, or signed discourse identified for purposes of analysis. It is often a language unit with a definable communicative function, such as a conversation, a poster Crystal (72).According to the linguist M.A.K. Halliday, meaning is the most important thing that makes a text a text; it has to make sense. A text, in his view

is everything that is meaningful in a particular situation. And the basis for meaning is choice (Halliday 1978:137).

A text is a part of the process of discourse. It is the product of any communication by writer / speaker. A text consists of cues for interpretation processes and traces of production processes. As Fairclough (1989) says this process includes in addition to the text the process of production, of which the text is a product, and the process of interpretation, for which the text is a resource. As a resource for the interpreter, the text consists of lexico-grammatical realisations of three kinds of meaning relating to three basic language functions (the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of systemic linguistics). These lexico-grammatical cues to ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings are interpreted with the help of other resources beyond the text. In using the term text, we refer not just to the written transcriptions but to "any kind of symbolic expressions requiring a physical medium and permitting of permanent storage" (Taylor & Van Every, 1993: 109). For a text to be generated, it must be spoken, written, or depicted in some way. Only when such an activity happens a text takes a shape, Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, &Robichaud, (1996: 7) say that when such an activity happens text takes on material form and becomes accessible to others. Therefore, talk is also a kind of text Fairclough(1995); van Dijk (1997a), and, in fact, the texts that make up discourses may take a variety of forms, including written documents, verbal reports, artwork, spoken words, pictures, symbols, buildings, and other artefacts (e.g., Fairclough, 1995; Grant, Keenoy, &Oswick, 1998; Taylor et al., 1996; Wood & Kroger, 2000). Discourses cannot be studied directly they can only be explored by examining the texts that constitute them (Fairclough, 1992; Parker, 1992).

The meaning of a text is realized by people's engagement with both the medium of dissemination and the representational affordances (whether social or material) of the modes that are used. Jewitt (184) Speech and writing are the primary medium of language use. A text is an instance of language in use. It ranges from a word to a large chunk of language. Sometimes, people associate text with just written language, but text is any instance of language use. One of the criteria of a text identified by Halliday and Hassan is that it must form "a unified whole." A text may be spoken, written, prose, or verse, dialogue, or monologue. According to Halliday and Hassan, a text has a texture and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text. It derives its texture from the fact that it functions as a unity with respect to its context. Pictures, or image texts as a more scientifically term we can now use, are often thought of being worth a thousand words. They can be interpreted in many different ways by different people. As there are too many possible interpretation for a single picture then how can we come to justified and grounded meaning(s) of the picture? How can we understand the basic structure of an image text? There should be this underlying structure that people can rely on in their efforts to make meaningful and justified meaning(s) of image texts for there seems to be nothing, even in what people find abstract or absurd, which is without pattern, hence, structure Hermawan (147) The assertion that "we are entering a historical epoch in which the image will take over from the written word" (Gombrich 1996:41) appears to have some value.

Text is the fabric in which discourse is manifested, whether spoken or written, whether produced by one or more participants. Text refers to the observable product of interaction (whether language production or interpretation). Drawing from Van Dijk 1977, Kress

avers that the terms text and discourse have frequently been used more or less interchangeably, as names for ‘extended stretches of speech or writing’ as well as pointing to the social meanings ‘inherent’ in such texts. Discourse has been readily used in relation to the (political/philosophical) (35). For Kress and Van Leeuwen, visual component of a text (image) is an independently organized and structured message, connected with verbal text but not dependent on it. Hermawan (147).

Texts, of whatever kind, are the result of the semiotic work of design, and of processes of composition and production. They result in ensembles composed of different modes, resting on the agentive semiotic work of the maker of such texts. Texts realize the interests of their makers. A text is (made) coherent through the use of semiotic resources that establish cohesion both internally, among the elements of the text, and externally, with elements of the environment in which texts occur (36).

Coherence is a defining characteristic of text. The principles of coherence are social in their origins and, being social, they point to meanings about ‘social order’. The coherence of a text is derived from the coherence of the social environment in which it is produced, or which it projects; it is realized by semiotic means (36). Being socially made, the principles of coherence differ from community to community and from different groups in communities (36).

In part, texts are constitutive of social institutions; in part they are traces of (inter-)actions in such institutions and, in this, they provide means of ‘reading’ the interests and purposes of those involved in the making of texts in an institution. That makes the category of text essential and significant in discourse analysis (DA); and it makes text clearly distinct, socially and semiotically, from discourse (37).

2.1.2 Context

One of the most important ways we understand what people mean when they communicate is by making reference to the social context within which they are speaking or writing. The meaning of an utterance can change dramatically depending on who is saying it, when and where it is said, and to whom it is said Jones (3). The discourse analyst has to take account of the context in which a piece of discourse occurs. The word context is a commonly used expression, which may mean different things to different people. Its general meaning is the set of facts that surrounds a particular event or situation. From the linguistic point of view, context is everything that surrounds the production of a piece of communication. These include the physical situation in which the communication takes place, the interlocutors, the knowledge of the communicators of their cultural norms and expected behaviour, and the expressions that precede and follow a particular expression. All these features of context help language speakers to interpret meaning appropriately. Linguists are particularly interest in the linguistic context of any form of language use.

Different linguists seek to define context from different point of view in order to answer questions encountered in their own fields, and to support their own ideas and theories. H. G. Widdowson, when focusing his study on language meaning, thought "context" as "those aspects of the circumstance of actual language use which are taken as relevant to meaning." He further pointed out, "in other words, context is a schematic construct... the achievement of pragmatic meaning is a matter of matching up the linguistic elements of the code with the schematic elements of the context." (H.G. Widdowson, 2000, p.126)

Guy Cook studying the relationship between discourse and literature, took “context” into consideration as well. In his definition, context is just a form of knowledge the world and “the term ‘context’ can be used in a broad and narrow sense. In the narrow sense, it refers to (knowledge of) factors outside the text under consideration. In the broad sense, it refers to (knowledge of) these factors and to (knowledge of) other parts of the text under consideration, sometimes referred to as „co-text“.” (Guy Cook, 1999, p. 24) When studying reference and inference, George Yule also took “context” into account. He provided us with a somewhat general definition, “Context is the physical environment in which a word is used.” (George Yule, 2000, 128)

Opinions on how to classify context vary from one to another. Some linguists divide context into two groups, while some insist on discussing context from three, four, or even six dimensions. Considering context from three dimensions, it is divided into linguistic context, situational context and cultural context.

Linguistic context refers to the context within the discourse, that is, the relationship between the words, phrases, sentences and even paragraphs. Situational context, or context of situation, refers to the environment, time and place, etc. in which the discourse occurs, and also the relationship between the participants. Situational context “is related to the situation in which the communication takes place” (Urbanová and Oakland 2002: 27, transl. by VZ). Cultural context refers to the culture, customs and background of epoch in language communities in which the speakers participate. Language is a social phenomenon, and it is closely tied up with the social structure and value system of society. Therefore, language cannot avoid being influenced by all these factors like social role, social status, sex and age, etc. Social roles are culture-specific functions,

institutionalized in a society and recognized by its members. By social status, we mean the relative social standing of the participants. Each participant in the language event must know, or make assumptions about his or her status in relation to the other, and in many situations, status will also be an important factor in the determination of who should initiate the conversation. Sex and age are often determinants of, or interact with, social status. The terms of address employed by a person of one sex speaking to an older person, may differ from those which would be employed in otherwise similar situations by people of the same sex or of the same age Lichao (877).

2.2 Semiotics

Semiotics is derived from the Greek semesion, meaning sign, semainon which means signifier and semainomenon meaning signified or indication. Generally, semiotic is the study of signs or an epistemology about the existence or the actuality of sign in societal life. Many pioneers, researchers, practitioners and authors of semiotic such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, Roland Barthes, Roman Jakobsen, Charles Morris and Umberto Eco (Eco, 1979; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993; Panuti & Zoest, 1996; Chandler, 2002) have agreed on the simple definition. For understanding and clearer purpose, semiotic accounts for everything that can be seen or be interpreted as a sign Halina and Yakin(1)

Over the years many scholars of semiotics have given their take on the definition of the sign. Such scholars include de Saussure (1966) and Peirce (1958) . Peirce, who is often considered as the father of semiotics, postulated a sign theory which gives an account of signification, representation, reference and meaning. Therefore, in the definition of a sign, it is crucial to first examine Peirce's theory in its breadth and complexities.

2.2.1 Peirce's Sign Theory

Peirce's basic claim in the definition of a sign is that it has three inter-related parts: The "*representamen*", the object and the "*interpretant*." He defines a sign as anything is so determined by something else, called its object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect, I call its *interpretant*, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former (Peirce, 1998: 478).

To simplify this, the *representamen* (sign) can be looked at as a signifier, for example an utterance, smoke for fire or just letters on a paper. While the object is seen as the idea or reality that is being conveyed by the sign, that is the material that the utterance or written letters attaches; their signification. For example, the letters "c h a i r" signify in English, the constructed material that is primarily used for sitting. And finally, the *interpretant*- which was Peirce's most innovative and distinctive feature is defined as the logical understanding that we derive in the relationship found between the sign and the object. According to him, the *interpretant* was the most fundamental element of the sign due to the fact that the process of signification is only made solid and complete because of the availability of the *interpretant* without which there is no dyadic relationship that cuts between sign and object. This means that a sign can only signify something upon being interpreted. That the meaning of a sign can only be realized in the interpretation it generates among sign users. He presented this relationship in a figure as shown below:

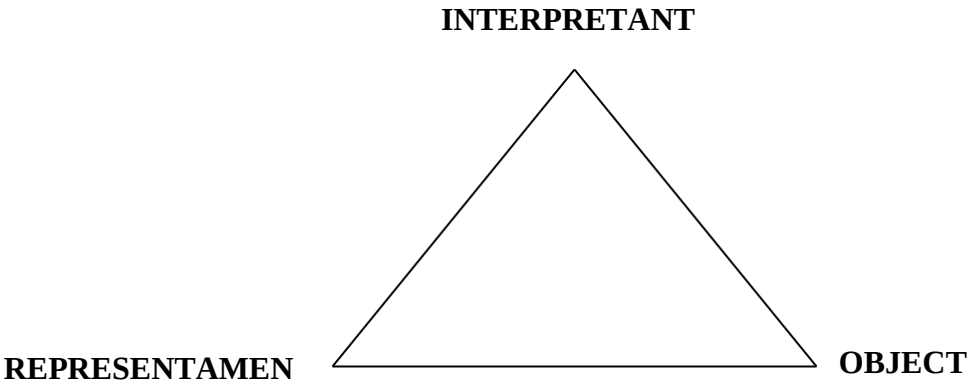


Fig 1.1 Peirce's triadic model of the sign (source: O'neil, 2008: 69)

The process of reference made between the connection of the *representamen* and object is a mental one that links the experiences of the *representamen* and the object. Peirce calls this mental process "abductive reasoning" where he says that based on available information, a person can make their best guess, this being the *interpretant.* (Peirce, 1935: 16)

2.2.2 The Object

Peirce postulates that the relevance of an object for signification does not always lie in all its characteristics; that the object only has certain features that will make a sign to signify it. There has to be determination so as to create the relationship between the object of a sign and the sign of the object and that the object determines the sign. This is synthesized by the idea that if a sign has to represent the object, then there are certain parameters that it has to fall within.

2.2.3 The Interpretant

The *interpretant* is defined as the underlying connection that exists between the object and the *representamen.* It is the understanding which is reached in the relationship of the

sign and the object. It can also be considered as the translation or the development of the original sign. The notion here is that the *interpretant* provides a translation of the sign which then allows a more complex understanding of the sign's object. He adds that the relationship between the sign and the *interpretant* is laid by determination. For the sign to determine an *interpretant*, it has to use some of the very features it uses on its object. For example, the i*nterpretant* sign of smoke is seen as fire. The observation made is based on the physical connection between the two

In summary, Peirce believes that for signification to occur there has to be two facts: sign-vehicle, and an object and *interpretant.* The object functions to determine the sign by putting constraints or parameters, which in all accounts must be met by the sign, and this is when it will signify the object. As a result, the sign will be signified by the object only by of some of its features. In Addition, the sign will determine an *interpretant* when we focus our understanding of certain features of the signifying relation between the two.

Elsewhere, in description of his concept of sign and signification, Peirce developed three different kinds of experiences. He named them, *firstness*, *secondness* and *thirdness*. He described the concept of firstness as the primary and ideal experience of phenomenon that does not have any reference to any other subject or object at all. He adds that *firstness* occurs in a situation where we are faced with an experience that we are unable to accurately describe, identify or even state. This is the state of undifferentiated and qualitative feeling.

The state of secondness involves the experience where one gets to experience a 'phenomenon or event that they do not recognize or cannot make an identification of but which resists them in some way.' In secondness we are able to differentiate between what

is known and that which is not known. For instance, seeing smoke will give a signification of fire. This then moves us to the notion of thirdness, this is where mental objects of representation are used to represent experiences of real objects. Thirdness is aided by other cognitive factors such as mental cognition, recall, and recognition

In relation to these three notions, Peirce also defined three sign type category. These were: icons, indices (index) and symbols. An icon, relates to firstness; as signs that represent their objects through a direct likeness or similarity. A card, a picture, a photograph or painting that has somebody's image is an icon of that person. Similarly, a map is an icon of the geographical area it demarcates. It is intuitively easy to understand icons because of the nearness of relationship they create with their referents. (Pierce, 1935: 17)

He relates index to the concept of secondness. It is a sign that has causal relationship with its referents, connected by some physical or presumed relation. For example, the specific position of the sun and shadow angles at a particular point will inform us the time of day. Foot prints of someone will definitely show the path he has travelled. For indices, there is a direct link between the object and the sign. They are signs that are manifest on physical entity creating a distinct connection between the form and content.

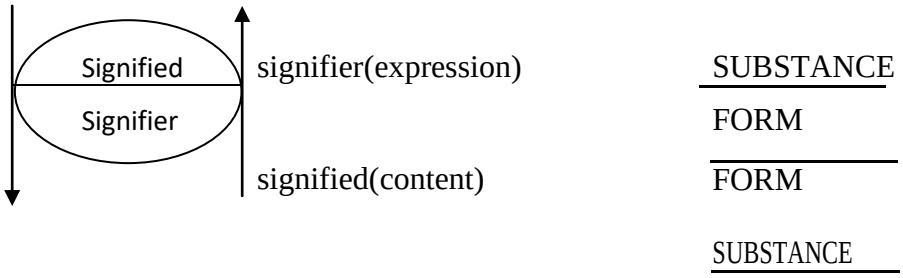
2.2.4 De Saussure's sign

Saussure defined a sign as that which is experienced when someone comes into contact with a set of stimuli that can be equated to a mental concept. (Saussure, 1966: 140) He posited that in order for words to convey meaning, it must consist of two significant parts; the 'signified' and the 'signifier.' The signified is that part of a word that pertains its meaning while the signifier is that part of the word that is representative of that

meaning. (Saussure, 1966: 142).Through his concepts of langue and parole, he notes that there is a mutual presupposition between the signified and the signifier. The 'signifier' he described as the form taken by the sign and 'the signified,' he considers to be the concept in the mind. This could include our experiences, impressions, feelings, perceptions, and attitudes in relation to an object or situation. For example, mentally, there is a representation of the word "cat". It is intrinsically bound to the signifier which is representative of that concept that is to mean that when put together; the letters CAT signify the concept of cat in written English.

In essence therefore what Saussure means is that the signifier represents the physical part of the sign while the signified is the meaning represented by the physical entity. Saussure's concepts are later clarified and strengthened by Hjelmslev (1961) where he introduces the two terms form and substance. He likens the substance of the signifier as the physical materials of the medium for example, sound, light, wood or stone (Hjelmslev, 1961: 51). The form of the signifier is that which

is recognized through interpretative codes as a representation of something, simply put, the form shows the way in which the concept is coded while substance is the concept in the mind. The relationship between signified and signifier as well as form and substance is considered as both syntactic and structural. As seen in the figures below representing Saussure's concept and Hjelmsev's



Saussure and Hjelmslev's sign (Source: O'neil, 2008: 68)

Hjelmslev's contributions provide important ways of looking at forms and structures of digital signs. For example the pixels on the screen provide us with substance of expression. The graphological qualities of the symbol represented on the screen for example, color, shape and structure give the form of expression. The form of the content is therefore that which the structure is identified with, for example a button or switch to be pressed or word for us to read. The substance of the content is what the form means for example 'play' or 'stop' button or an error message. (Shaumyan, 1987: 78)

However, Palmer (1981) argues that because of this type of categorization, sometimes meaning can be difficult to establish. He states that it is a difficult to create the nature and relationship between the 'signifier' and the 'signified.' He then proposes the use of other terms such as "denotation and reference." Denotation describes the group of persons and things- everything that the word or sign denotes and reference describes, the actual persons or things or simply, everything the word refers to (Palmer, 1981: 8). Earlier, Ogden and Richards (1949) had introduced 'the concept of the mind' where they state that 'thought' forms the strongest link between the 'symbol' and the 'referent.' (Ogden & Richards, 1949: 11) They describe this relationship in a triangle as shown in the figure below:

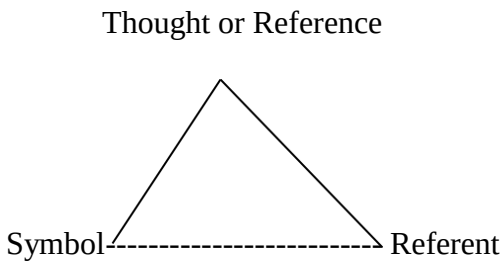


Fig 1.3 Showing Ogden & Richard's link Source :(Ogden &Richards, 1949:11)

"Traditional semiotics likes to assume that the relevant meanings are frozen and fixed in the text itself, to be extracted and decoded by the analyst by reference to a coding system that is impersonal and neutral, and universal for users of the code. Social semiotics cannot assume that texts produce exactly the meanings and effects that their authors hope for: it is precisely the struggles and their uncertain outcomes that must be studied at the level of social action, and their effects in the production of meaning." (Hodge & Kress, 1988:12) Social semiotics aims to account for 'context', not based on "a naive text-context dichotomy", but rather based on the assumption that "context has to be theorized and understood as another set of texts." (Hodge & Kress, 1988:8)

In the late 1980's, when Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen began to develop a social semiotic approach to the visual, the focus was still on print media, culminating in their book Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design (1996). In Reading Images they propose a framework for the analysis of image, which draws on the broad semiotic aspects of Halliday's social semiotic theory and made use of the system networks as a heuristic framework for theorizing meaning as choice. Like Pragmatics, Social Semiotics is concerned with meaning in context. (2)

Social semiotics is concerned with meaning makers and meaning making. It studies the media of dissemination and the modes of communication that people use and develop to

represent their understanding of the world and to shape power relations with others. It draws on qualitative, fine-grained analysis of records of meaning making, such as 'artefacts', 'texts', and 'transcripts', to examine the production and dissemination of discourse across the variety of social and cultural contexts within which meaning is made Bezemer and Jewitt(1-2).

Social semiotics studies how meaning is derived from social institutions and relationships in the society. People normally employ signs and symbols that have been previously learnt from a corpus pool within their culture in an attempt to effectively communicate their views, feelings, attitudes and ideas about life. Social semiotics is therefore important to this work, with the qualification of emoticons and emojis as semiotic resources capable of generating semiotic potential, it therefore offers a utility framework for approaching, analysing and interpreting the character of these technological artefacts as a form of meaning making resources. Within social semiotics is a term known as semiotic structuralism. Semiotic structuralism looks at the meaning of semiotic resources within the social context in which they occur. This is based on the fact that meaning is no longer a construct of coding and coding. It considers the string linkages between 'signifier and signified,' between one sign and the other, between two varied context which can be either situational context or even political context and above all how people derive meaning within all these contexts. It analyses semiotic units on the grounds of context rather than the texts alone. Simply put therefore, semiotics has transcended beyond the study of signs and codes to a more elaborate system of social and multimodal analysis.

The multimodal scope of social semiotics means that it can attend to forms of meaning making which remain largely unattended in Pragmatics, notably in contexts where people

are not physically co-present and where speech is not involved, such as a child drawing. Where the empirical domains of Pragmatics and Social Semiotics overlap, the two provide distinctive analyses, using concepts derived from their different perspective on meaning making and multimodality.

2.5 Empirical Review

Emojis are often confused and used interchangeably with another digital symbolic form, emoticons Hamza (57).The difference between the emoji and the emoticon is that the former is now a fully-fledged picture, no longer requiring a combination of keys Pele (396).Although emoticons are used frequently in virtual communities, we do not yet have clear insight into their functions. We also do not know whether the different forms that have been developed recently serve the same functions equally. Some or all are supposed to be indicative of feelings and emotions; some and maybe all might help to convey the intended tone of a message; and some might be used simply as embellishment. Moreover, they might create misunderstandings. They can also fulfill different functions simultaneously. As Moschini (2016) notes, they are seen as an increasingly rich form of communication and as a manifestation of the playfulness and visual nature of digital culture. Since the initial face-based emojis were introduced, the potential the library of emojis has grown and evolved and now includes animals, food, faces and other pictures which can be used individually or together to create meaningful communicative strings Hamza (57). Indeed, it can be argued that emojis are in fact expanding linguistic ability, and opening up new possibilities for innovative communication channels and expansion of traditional writing, making language more visual and playful and thus returning to more creative forms of language (Danesi, 2016).Emojis can therefore be considered as an

expedient way to convey pragmatic information in a short text through imagery, much as ancient pictographic communication systems did (Kern, 2015). In addition, emoji language is not something which can be taught, rather it is acquired over time, through use and sharing (58). Spoken language, in any tongue is nearly always delivered with emotional or physical cues, whether this is voice tone, hand or eye gestures and other visual elements. In a digital context, these are not present. Emojis close this gap in a creative and highly visual way and ensure the writers thoughts and feelings are expressed in a concise and fun way. Given that many facial expressions of emotion are universal this also underlines the potential universality of the emoji language (Azuma, 2012). In effect, they act as non-verbal surrogates, telling the reader of the message what the facial expression of the writer would be, and delivering additional social cues to support understanding of the message. Subsequently, common facial expressions are often universal, and the emojis that represent them can be used to communicate emotion universally. This global understanding of pictographic representations of emotions thus can clearly contribute to effective cross-cultural communication. This is a further parallel to the Egyptian hieroglyph system which was understood across all the regions controlled by the Pharaohs, irrespective of their social status (Coulmas, 2003). Woollaston in his investigation discovered that in many Western countries, nearly 40% of all texts contained at least one emoji, and even in countries such as Korea, one third contained these symbols. Recognising this growth and the potential of emojis as a language form, Azuma and Maurer (2007) considered whether this increased usage of emojis meant a new or an auxiliary language for digital communication. Their findings indicated that emojis would develop into a universal symbolic language and certainly the increasing

range of emojis and their frequency of use appears to corroborate this view. One of the reasons for the popularity of these small symbols is their ability to express emotional complexity in a short and creative way that cannot be conveyed with verbal language, especially in the written form as inflection, tone and rhythm. This suggests, as Crystal (2008) notes that emojis, and indeed text language are not devolving language but rather enhancing both literacy and emotional expression as well as demonstrating the evolution of language as a living entity that responds to social and cultural change. For millennials (those born from 2000) therefore, emojis and indeed text language can be seen as new form of writing, the rise in blog posts, tweets, and instantly available information on other social medium is an illustration of how widespread this language form has become. These new genres of writing are challenging the status quo of traditional literary compositions and this may be one of the causes of concern for traditionalists (Crystal, 2008). However, as already noted language is not stagnant, it evolves with society and new forms and terminologies are constantly appearing, and emojis are just another aspect of this. Pulling away from the restrictions that alphabet systems place on creative expression, millennials use emojis as social-emotional communication, offering new layers of understanding and expression in a visual rather than orthographic format. Returning again to the parallels and connections between hieroglyphs or Chinese character writing, these can mean different things depending on the characters or pictograms in the string. This is the same for emojis and illustrates how they underline tone and meaning as a new version of an old language and communication format (Brisson, 2015). What this leads to is to consider how emojis can either replace or enhance language.

Research on the use of emoticons in virtual communities over the years has addressed various issues such as their function as indicators of emotional state and the differences in usage between men and women Skovholt et al (781). One of which is Skovholt et al who carried out their research using e-mail from different Nordic companies as its data and employing pragmatics as a theory for their analysis.

Emoticons were initially compositions of letters that iconically look like facial expressions (after turning one's head 90º). These are defined by Danesi (2009, p. 110) as: strings of keyboard characters that, when viewed sideways (or in some other orientation), can be seen to suggest a face expressing a particular emotion. An emoticon is often used in an e-mail message or newsgroup posting as a comment on the text that accompanies it. Common emoticons include the smiley :-) or :) and the winkey ;-) and the yawn:-O, among others. Francisco(521) Fullwood and Martino (2007) focused on how emoticon use affects participant evaluations of extroversion and agreeableness. They concluded that the online chat partner was regarded as more extrovert and more agreeable when emoticons were used in conversation. Finally, Derks et al. (2007, p. 843) emphasize how emoticons "enhance the exchange of social information by providing additional social cues beyond what is found in the text of a message."

According to a study by Derks, Bos and von Grumbkow, emoticons are used in a comparable way to facial behavior in a face-to-face interaction. The study also refers to results showing that emoticons have an impact on the interpretation of messages, this being achieved through emphasis and the possibility to express sarcasm. Steinmetz writes about the way in which humans always communicated with images, referring to Egyptian hieroglyphs and Paleolithic cave drawings.

Stanton contends that as emoticons continued to evolve, they seemed to overcome initial criticism that replacing verbal articulations of complex emotional states with simplistic smiles or frowns would impoverish electronic communication and cause users' writing skills to decline. In large part, this seems due to the fact that each new generation has made emoticons more visual, hiding their punctuation mark origins behind actual, pictorial images (85). He states that the first-generation emoticons remained discrete punctuation marks, second generation emoticons tried to address this issue by converting punctuation marks into simple, linear images: ☺. Third-generation emoticons added motion—animated emoticons that moved, bounced, or made sounds as the computer translated a series of punctuation marks as animated images (85).

Hogenboom et al has analyzed how emoticons typically convey sentiment and demonstrate how we can exploit this by using a novel, manually created emoticon sentiment lexicon in order to improve a state-of-the-art lexicon-based sentiment classification method. They evaluated their approach on 2,080 Dutch tweets and forum messages, which all contain emoticons and have been manually annotated for sentiment (1). They purports that sentiment analysis comes to answer this need. Sentiment analysis refers to a broad area of natural language processing, computational linguistics, and text mining (1).

Drawing on Austin's (1962) theory of speech acts, Dresner and Herring in their studies on Functions of the non-verbal in CMC: emoticons and illocutionary force argues that the primary function of emoticons is not to convey emotion but rather to indicate an illocutionary force, i. e. the intended effect of the utterance. Moreover, they suggest that emoticons serve two additional functions: They function as indicators of emotion, and

they function as indicators of what they call ‘‘nonemotional meaning, mapped conventionally onto facial expression’’ (263). They explain this use of emoticons as indicating a joke by using a wink: ;-). The wink is not signaling emotion; rather, it is conventionally indicating a joking intent (263).

Huls E. concurs to the view of Dresner and Herring in her Corpus based analysis of emoticons stating that emoticons function either independently as speech acts, more specifically as expressive speech acts (71.0%), or they function in the context of textually expressed speech acts as ‘embellishments’ or as politeness strategies (29.0%). Aimghblobeli who employed a corpus based analysis has considered the linguistic features of emoticons in SMS Discourse.

Emoticons have found their way into everyday computer-mediated communication and had become the paralanguage of the Web [17]. By then, 6.1% of the messages on electronic mailing lists [28] and 13.2% of UseNet newsgroup posts [38] were estimated to contain emoticons (3). Within the last 30years, emoticons and emoji has developed different forms and meanings, and a growing number of forms accompany different types of virtual communities.

Scholars seem to agree that emoticons are graphic signs which are used to indicate an emotional state (Rezabek & Cochenour, 1995; Raymond, 1996; Wolf, 2000; Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow, 2007; Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow, 2008) in Skovholt (782). Most of these studies assume that emoticons are used to compensate for the lack of non verbal communication cues, such as facial expressions, intonation, gestures, and other bodily indicators, in CMC (cf. Kiesler, Siegel, &McGuire, 1984; Sproull & Kielser, 1986; Shao-Kang, 2008; Krohn, 2004) in Skovholt (5). In other words, emoticons are perceived as

providing support to written communication, in the same way that visual and body language support face-to-face communication. In the field of linguistics, emoticons are primarily viewed as emotion markers Baron (242). Renowned linguist David Crystal (36) defines emoticons as a ‘‘combination of keyboard characters designed to show an emotional facial expression.’’ Furthermore, he proposes that emoticons seem to have a ‘‘purely pragmatic force – acting as a warning to the recipient(s) that the sender is worried about the effect a sentence might have’’ (38). The first study (known to the authors) on emoticons was conducted in 1995 by Rezabeck and Cochenour; it examined the frequency, variety, and usage patterns of emoticons in four listservs.

The frequency of emoticons varied within the four listservs, and in the listserv with the highest score, every fourth message contained an emoticon. The most frequently occurring emoticon was the traditional smiley, :-), followed by the smiley without a ‘‘nose’’). Although the listservs contained a variety of emoticons, Rezabeck and Cochenour concluded that there was most likely a shared understanding of the meaning conveyed by the emoticons occurring most frequently. The use of the smiley depended on individual preferences and varied according to the context (7).

Emoticons are iconic, in the sense that they visually resemble facial expressions, to a greater or lesser extent. They have traditionally been created by using letters and punctuation marks (as in [;-D], but nowadays “graphic emoticons” (the ones with full facial display and even animated quality) are the norm, to the extent that in many interfaces, if one types a typical sequence for creating an emoticon (e.g. typing “;” + “-” + “)” in succession), a fully iconic, graphic emoticon is automatically created. This increasingly iconic quality of emoticons may alter the way the information that they

communicate is interpreted by the reader. Franscisco (515) Emoticons are suitable for certain audiences in certain informal contexts and not advisable in formal or academic settings. It comes as no surprise that emoticons are known to be used more frequently in socio-emotional contexts than in task-oriented ones (Derks et al., 2007, 2008b). Users have more control of when and with whom they are using emoticons when they engage in synchronous conversations.(517)

The Japanese telecommunication planner Shigetaka Kurita is credited with inventing emojis in 1999, when he was involved in the launch of a mobile Internet platform called "i-mode" (Blag- don 2013). At the time, Kurita was working at NTT Docomo, one of the largest mobile services in Japan as a member of the "i-mode" team, the aim of which was to provide Internet service on a type of mobile phones, the so-called "featured phones", which had small LCD screens that could only 'contain' up to 48 letters. This monochrome site of display would have highly limited the ex- change of information, and this is the reason why Kurita started to plan the creation of alphanumeric images that would take the emoticons (that had already gained popularity on the Internet) to a strictly iconic level. Kurita stated that the American AT&T was already offering information for cell phone users but "everything was shown by text, even the weather forecast", even if "Japanese weather fore- casts have always included pictures or symbols to describe the weather" (Nakano 2015). Kurita's familiarity with this way of producing information led him to envision the possibility to create text messages using images rather than words. The first set of emojis designed by him was made of 180 items that comprised not only smiley faces representing emotions, but also objects and symbols such as light bulbs or bombs.

It was Google that submitted an official request to the Unicode Consortium to have emojis standardized since, in 2006, it had decided to enter the Japanese mobile market (Nasser/ Benen- son et al., 2013) However, it was only with the release of Apple's mobile operating system iOS 5 in late 2011, that emojis "made their real international debut" (Blangdon 2013). Technically, nowadays the term "emoji" refers to a single set of Unicode characters that is associated to an image (Davis/Edberg 2015). Unicode is an international computer industry standard for encoding and displaying most of the world's writing systems that allows one operating system to recognize text from another (Unicode Consortium 2015b). The Unicode represents the foundation for software internationalization and standardization and, as Joseph D. Becker – one of the co-founders – affirmed (1998 [1988]: 1), it was envisioned as "a new, worldwide AS- CII" that is the American Standard Code for Information Interchange. Indeed, prior to the creation of Unicode, much of the computer world relied on the character encoding for English text, which was the 7-bit ASCII. Since the people of the world, "need to be able to communicate and to compute in their own native language, other than English", with the spreading of computers there was the rising of the necessity of an "international/ multilingual text encoding standard that [was] reliable as ASCII, but that cover[ed] all the scripts of the world" (Becker 1998 [1988]: 2)

Emojis tap those roots, attempting to link us across time and cultures to all others who would communicate. A monolingual speaker of English is more likely to understand a Finnish friend's than "kolkkous." Emojis operate at the level of the non-discursive, potentially filling a gap that separates even speakers of the same language. They inhabit a niche that is beyond the reach of alphabetic text and push us to engage our visual

faculties. Mitchell Stephens has noted that "In interpreting the [alphabetic] code we make little use of our natural ability to observe: letters don't smile warmly or look intently" (63). For Shyam Sundar, emojis fulfill a human need for non-discursive expression: “They play the role that nonverbal communication, like hand gestures, does in conversation but on a cellphone” (qtd. in Wortham). Rather than having alphabetic text fly solo in conveying a message, emojis expand the possibilities of what might be expressed. Since their inception, emojis have been swept up by users with bigger ambitions for them, and in doing so have made the leap from being "users" to being "rhetors," joining a classic tradition that dates back to Ancient Greece and Rome. Catherine Hobbs explores a history of rhetoric tied to visualization, explaining that Greco-Roman law cases often depended on both the presentation of actual objects as well as orators’ abilities to use visual imagery in persuading their audiences (“a scar, a wound, a bloody weapon or a toga”) [58], a practice that continues in contemporary courtrooms, admittedly for better and for worse. The desire to argue effectively, to reach an audience through images and words, has a long and revered history that emojis have joined.

Kyle, Malone and Wall (2017) believe that emojis have become popular for clarifying online communication; they also believe the use of the same brings out certain psychological concepts such as emotional expression, emotional mimicry, emotional appraisal, pragmatics, and intention detection.

Tian et al. (2017) wrote that emojis act as a cue for sentiment analysis of tweets result in better accuracy compared to using linguistic text alone, where positive emojis are more common in use than negative ones. Dürscheid and Siever (2017) talk about the rising chances of emojis becoming a universal language, but say that the probability is low, as

emojis cannot convey complex matters, and seldom have a reference function. They also speak about certain conditions that a sign must fulfil to be a Unicode emoji.

Kelly and Watts (2015) agreed, and said that emoji could serve relationally useful roles in conversation, not necessarily associated with discrete expressions of emotion, and could also play an important role in controlling a conversational thread or in encouraging playful behaviour. In the same year, Novak et. al. (2015) showed that emojis were "tools" that reflect human sentiments, which was observed when sentiment classification models could be created, and applied to, several real-time scenarios, in the analysis of 1.6 million annotated tweets across 13 different languages.

Stark and Crawford (2015) believed that the practical use of the emojis were intended to normalize, capitalize and focus on the collective strength of affect in human social relations online, where emojis acted as exuberant forms of social expressions.

Zhu (2015) said that emojis were cartoon-style facial expressions used to express certain emotions in text-based communication, whilst, remaining rather similar to, but were different from, emoticons, which had changed the way people perceived the correct emotional, attitude and attention based intents in online interactions.

Gullberg (2016) wrote that the emojis were merely not used to convey emotions, but could also efficiently and politely react to another person's message, which may not need a long reply, act as tools in maintaining relationships, be used as inside jokes, and be an indication of the enthusiasm of the person.

Lu et. al. (2016) believe that the compactness of emojis reduces the effort of input, the rich semantics they convey expresses ideas and emotions more vividly. Andral and Larroque (2016) brought out the fact companies and marketers are aware of the target

with whom they can use emojis, and that they are marketing tools that can be used to improve the brand image, to increase the interest of consumers towards a company and to make people more receptive to the brand.

Peele (2016) observes that "Artists have transformed several famous children's stories into emoji posters, Bible has also been anonymously translated in emoji. In context of broken English and visual culture, social media users adopted emojis as means of expression. Worriers fear that, in the existing ripe conditions, we are witnessing the demise of written English." There is a belief that the increased use of emojis is a sign that language is devolving, and returning society to the pictorial representations of ancient history which are deemed less intellectual or intelligent (Jones, 2015; McIntyre, 2016).

Emojis have emerged as a means of indicating euphemisms, sarcasm, hints and affection which were previously difficult to convey within a text and their visual nature is part of longer tradition of using images to convey meaning in writing (McIntyre, 2016). At the same time, communication is complex and the use of emojis can either clarify or confuse the receiver, because they indicate presence of emotion but absence of the individual, due to their digital nature. In addition, there remains a level of interpretation, the smiley face emoji can mean "I'm happy" or "I like this", depending on the focus of the message, the relationship between the interlocutors and the context of the message (Dresner and Herring, 2010). This is a further parallel with alphabetized language and reinforces the multiples roles that emojis may take in enhancing communication. At the same time, it also underlines that emojis are not a new language, solely for the use of a younger generation, but that they represent a return to the use of visualization, and thus coding of information Hamza (59)

However, there is an argument, as Dresner and Herring (2010) suggest that the role of these visuals does not incorporate actual linguistic traits of English as they do not contain letters. In effect, if emojis do not have a direct convention and connection to English for example, can they really be viewed as a language? The answer to this lies in the fact that the user of an emoji must have a certain understanding of the rules of English, in terms of tone and socio-cultural/pragmatic intent in order to determine which emojis best meet their desired context and intent. In this respect, the conventions of speech theory still apply, suggesting there is a language base for emojis (Kavanagh, 2016). In addition, emojis can be seen as similar to logographs, as they may be representative of a singular morpheme, or word, but one image may be used to indicate multiple emotional reactions. As such they are a language, but one with universal concepts (Brisson, 2015) and thus have a wider comprehension potential amongst different cultures.

As Lee (2016, 208) notes, emojis are enhancing the written word rather than completely replacing it. In addition, emojis can be grouped to increase emphasis, and create responses of greater creativity and imagination than words alone. As such, they are demonstrating their connection to earlier language forms, but in a more sophisticated, technologically coded manner (Brisson, 2015). There are however some generalizations about the use of emojis as language, with suggestions that women are using them more than men (Dresner and Herring, 2010); and men being more likely to use sarcastic emojis and perceptions of their usage as positive or negative being generation dependent. However, when considering the future of language, and whether emojis are a new language form, it is also clear that millennials are less rule-bound than previous generations, and are more likely to include emojis in their texts and even work emails.

Does this reinforce the notion of emojis as a new language form or does it simply recognize the evolutionary nature of language and the desire for visual information that is part of the human condition? (Hagy, 2010).

This research differs from other works as it does not only consider emojis in isolation but emojis in the context of the chats they are used using a Social-semiotic multimodality framework and not Computer mediated communication or Computer mediated discourse analysis as other researchers have done.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The world of meaning has always been multimodal. Now for a variety of reasons, that realization is once again moving centre stage. Traditional forms of language and communication have shifted from being one-dimensional and highly text based and are now highly multimodal (1). Kress (2010) Multimodal discourse analysis defines a diverse range of approaches for studying how social actors produce meaning and how social actors interact with other social actors and their environments Prinni (1).According to Langlotz (2013), there are four central approaches to multimodality, which are the following:

1. (Systemic functional) multimodal discourse analysis e.g., O'Toole, O'Halloran, Stenglin;
2. Social semiotics e.g., Kress, Van Leeuwen, Jewitt, Bezemer;
3. Multimodal interactional analysis e.g. Norris, Scollon and Scollon;
4. Multimodal conversation analysis e.g., Deppermann, Mondada, Streeck, Goodwin, Heath and Luff.

Scollon and Scollon (2011: 170) describe multimodality as follows:‘Multimodality’, a new term, has become a focus of academic and intellectual interest just within the past decade or so, while language has been at the centre of such interests for millennia. The task of relating multimodality and language, then, is a task of relating this new and fresh but still largely amorphous perspective on human communication to a complex, ancient, richly developed, and historical one which is differently naturalized in different cultures.

… [Now]we explore the common principles behind multimodal communication. We move away from the idea that the different modes in multimodal texts have strictly bounded and framed specialist tasks, as in a film where images may provide the action, sync sounds a sense of realism, music, a layer of emotion, and so on, with the editing process supplying the ‘integration code’ , the means for synchronizing the elements through a common rhythm Instead we move towards a view of multimodality in which common semiotic principle operate in and across different modes, and in which it is therefore quite possible for music to encode action, or images to encode emotion. This move comes, on our part, not because we think we had it all wrong before and have now suddenly seen the light. It is because we want to create a theory of semiotics appropriate to contemporary semiotic practice. In the past, and in many contexts still today, multimodal texts (such as films or newspapers) were organized as hierarchies of specialist modes integrated by an editing process. Moreover, they were produced in this way, with different, hierarchically organized specialists in charge of the different modes, and editing process bringing their work together.

Kress Gunther’s theory of multimodality will be the adopted framework for this research. According to Kress, Multimodality is a theory which looks at the many different modes

that people use to communicate with each other and to express themselves. A multimodal approach is indispensable if we want to fully analyse communication today because it allows us to unrestrainedly look at situations with written and spoken language but also with respect to image, gaze, colour, layout, position and many other different modes and mediums that permit a broader analysis. This theory is relevant as an increase in technology tools, and associated access to multimedia composing software, has led to people being able to easily use many modes in art, writing, music, and dance and every-day interactions with each other.

Many scholars try to give a definition to multimodal discourse. Van Leeuwen (2005) points out that "multimodality means the combination of different semiotic modes—for example, language and music—in a communicative artefact or event". A more specific definition is that "multimodal discourse involves the interaction of multiple semiotic resources such as language, gesture, dress, architecture, proximity lighting, movement, gaze, camera angle, and so on" (O'Halloran, Tan, Smith & Podlasov, 2011).

Understanding how people make meaning through various semiotic resources and the relationship of these practices with self-representation or with the representation of others is a major focus of Multimodal Studies, especially in its social semiotic formulation (Jewitt 2009). Indeed, a socio-semiotic approach to multimodality postulates a common communication trajectory that involves three interconnected steps: what people want to signify, the relationship between what people want to signify and which ways of communication or signs are more suitable in given socio-cultural contexts (Kress/Jewitt 2003). The production of signs, that is a "combination of meaning and form" (Kress 1997: 6), is "motivated" (Hodge/Kress 1993) and people's moves from mode to mode

and from media to media are driven by interests and by "what is possible to express and represent, readily, easily with a mode, given its materiality and given the cultural social history of the mode" (Kress/Jewitt 2003: 14).

From the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis, Jewitt (2009) puts forward that "multimodality describes approaches that understand communication and representation to be more than about language, and which attend to the full range of communicational forms people use-image, gesture, gaze, posture, and so on-and the relationships between them".

Jewitt (2009) thinks that there are four interconnected theoretical assumptions underpin multimodality:

The first is that language is part of a multimodal ensemble and representation and communication always draw on a multiplicity of modes, all of which have the potential to contribute equally to meaning. The second is that each mode in. Kress and van Leeuwen negotiate Barthes' idea that images are open to too many varieties of possible meanings. They refute Barthes' idea that the meanings of an image are always related to and dependent (my italic) on verbal text. For Kress and van Leeuwen, visual component of a text (image) is an independently organized and structured message, connected with verbal text but not dependent on it Hermawaan (147).

A multimodal ensemble is understood as realizing different communicative work. Multimodality assumes that all modes have, like language, been shaped through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize social functions. The third is that people orchestrate meaning through their selection and configuration of modes. The fourth is that meanings of signs fashioned from multimodal semiotic resources are, like speech, social.

Kress (2012) also holds the same view and thinks that "in a multimodality approach, all modes are framed as one field, as one domain. Jointly they are treated as one connected cultural resources for meaning-making by members of a social group at a particular moment."

Besides, in China, some linguists also develop the theory of Multimodal Discourse Analysis and point out their own views about it. Zhu Yongsheng (2007) proposes two kinds of standards to judge whether it is multimodal discourse or not. The first criterion has already accepted wide recognition in Chinese academic circles. It is realized by judging how many kinds of modality are involved in the discourse. If there is only one modality used in the text, it can be called monomodal discourse while if there are two or more kinds of modality involved, it can be called multimodal discourse. The second criterion is realized by judging how many semiotic systems are involved. Some discourses only consist one kind of modality while some of them contain more than one semiotic system, such as comic strips (which only involve visual modality, but contain both wordage and pictures).

A mode is generally defined as a communication channel that a culture recognizes. Examples of modes are writing, gesture, posture, gaze, font choice and color, images, video, and even the interactions between them. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) have exemplified that several different *modes* need to be considered such as *image, layout* and *colour* in combination with text and writing to explore fuller meanings. *Modes* as defined by Bezemer and Mavers (2011: 196) are a set of resources for meaning making that are socially and culturally constructed, such as image, speech or gesture. More precisely, Bezemer and Mavers (2011: 196) note the following:

Modes have different materialities shaped by the histories of cultural work, offer certain possibilities for representation. Given that material and cultural difference, there can never be a perfect 'translation' from one mode to another: image does not have words, just as writing does not have depiction; relations which in speech or writing are expressed in clauses and verbs are realized through 'vectors' in image; forms of arrangement 'syntax' differ in modes which are temporally or spatially instantiated.

While many of these modes have always existed, they have not always been recognized as a legitimate or culturally accepted form of communication or expression. Learning theorists who advocate for multimodality emphasize that people communicate in a variety of ways, and that in order to completely understand someone, the many modes they use to communicate must be observed and recognized.

Kress introduced a strong emphasis on the social character of meaning and developed the concept of the motivated sign Kress, 1997. This served to foreground the agency of the sign maker and the process of sign making. Kress, 1997 he offers a detailed account of the materiality and processes of young children's engagement with texts, how they interpret, transform and redesign the semiotic resources and signs available to them – what has been described as chains of semiosis.

From this perspective, signs (e.g. talk, gestures, and textual artefacts) are analyzed as material residues of a sign maker's interests. The analytical focus is on understanding their interpretative and design patterns and the broader discourses, histories and social factors that shape that. In a sense then, the text is seen as a window onto its maker. Viewing signs as motivated and constantly being re-made draws attention to the interests and intentions that motivate a person's choice of one semiotic resource over another

(Kress, 1993). This ‘interest’ connects a person’s choice of one resource over another with the social context of sign production – returning to the importance of meaning as choice within social semiotic theories of communication. The modal resources that are available to the person are an integral part of that context – hence the importance of multimodality to understanding the process of meaning making.

Bezemer avers that four core concepts are common across multimodal research: mode, semiotic resource, modal affordance and inter-semiotic relations. Within social semiotics, a mode is understood as an outcome of the cultural shaping of a material through its use in the daily social interaction of people. The semiotic resources of a mode come to display regularities through the ways in which people use them and can be thought of as the connection between representational resources and what people do with them. The term modal affordance refers to the material and the cultural aspects of modes: what it is possible to express and represent easily with a mode. It is a concept connected to both the material as well as the cultural and social historical use of a mode. Modal affordance raises the question of what a mode is ‘best’ for what. This raises the concept of inter-semiotic relationships, and how modes are configured in particular contexts. These four concepts provide the starting point for multimodal analysis (3).

Wikipedia propounds that multimodality has developed as a theory throughout the history of writing. The idea of multimodality has been studied since the 4th century BC, when classical rhetoricians alluded to it with their emphasis on voice, gesture, and expressions in public speaking. However, the term multimodality was not defined with significance until the 20th century. During this time, an exponential rise in technology created many new modes of presentation. Since then, multimodality has become standard in the 21st

century, applying to various network-based forms such as art, literature, social media and advertising.

In affirmation to the above notion, Kress et al asserts that multimodality was developed in the early 2000s. It originated from linguistic ideas of communication in particular the work of Michael Halliday on language as a social semiotic system. Halliday's work shifted attention from language as a static linguistic system to language as a social system - how language is shaped by the ways that people use it and the social functions that the resources of language are put to in particular settings. In Language as Social Semiotic (1978) Halliday sets out a theory of language built on a social functional perspective of meaning and a framework for understanding language as a system of options and meaning potentials: in summary the idea of meaning as choice(5).Multimodality is an inter-disciplinary approach drawn from social semiotics that understands communication and representation as more than language and attends systematically to the social interpretation of a range of forms of making meaning. It provide concepts, methods and a framework for the collection and analysis of visual, aural, embodied, and spatial aspects of interaction and environments Jewitt (1). Multimodality refers to a field of application rather than a theory Bezemer and Jewitt (1).The detailed and multifaceted analysis of the internet and websites with all of their constituting parts requires what today would be called in a somewhat trendy way a ''multimodal'' analysis Pauwels (250). The term ''mode'' (or ''modality''), as distinct aspects of a communicative utterance or a medium is sometimes used in connection with physiological or sensory channels or capacities such as seeing (the visual mode), hearing (auditory mode), touching (tactile mode or the ''haptic'' mode when considered as aspects of a device), tasting (gustatory mode) and

smelling (the olfactory mode). Modalities quite often are also defined from the medium side, thus one speaks for instance about images and texts, music and vocal and non vocal sounds, though they all belong to the visual or auditory channel or mode Pauwels (250). Multimodal analysis not only takes different modes into account but also has a strong focus on the effects of their interplay Pauwels (250). Multimodality allows for analysis of visual resources, such as emoticons and emoji in the context of the message that they want to convey. "Mode", which is a key term in Multimodal Studies, refers to the set of resources that people in a given culture can use to communicate. Understanding how people make meaning through various semiotic resources and the relationship of these practices with self-representation or with the representation of others is a major focus of Multimodal Studies, especially in its social semiotic formulation. Indeed, a socio-semiotic approach to multimodality postulates a common communication trajectory that involves three interconnected steps: what people want to signify, the relationship between what people want to signify and which ways of communication or signs are more suitable in given socio-cultural contexts Moschini (13-14). Modes can also be understood in terms of Halliday's (1978) classification of meaning. He suggests that every sign simultaneously tells us something about 'the world' (ideational meaning), positions us in relation to someone or something (interpersonal meaning) and produces a structured text (textual meaning). Multimodality sets out to explore how these meanings are realized in all modes Bezemer and Jewitt(6)

Going by Jewitt, a second assumption central to multimodal research is all modes have, like language, been shaped through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize social functions as required by different communities. Therefore each mode is understood

as having different meaning potentials or semiotic resources and to realize different kinds of communicative work. Multimodality takes all communicational acts to be constituted of and through the social. This also draws attention to the ways in which communication is constrained and produced in relation to social context and points to how modes come into spaces in particular ways (4-5). Kress buttresses that in a multimodal approach, all modes are framed as one field, as one domain. Jointly they are treated as one connected cultural resource for (representation as) meaning- making by members of a social group at a particular moment. All are seen as equal, potentially, in their capacity to contribute meaning to a complex semiotic entity, a text, and each is treated as distinct in its material potential and social shaping. Each therefore needs to be dealt with as requiring apt descriptive categories which arise from that difference (38).

It is pertinent to note that multimodality foregrounds the modal choices people make and the social effect of these choices on meaning. There is therefore a strong emphasis on the notion of context within social semiotic multimodal analysis. The context shapes the resources available for meaning making and how these are selected and designed. Signs, modes, and meaning making are treated as relatively fluid, dynamic and open systems intimately connected to the social context of use.

Gunthers buttresses that In Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA) the textual 'threads' are many and they are materially diverse: gesture, speech, image (still or moving), writing, music (on a website or in a film). These, as well as three-dimensional entities, can be drawn into one textual/semiotic whole. Text, in MMDA, is a multimodal semiotic entity in two, three or four dimensions: (36)

Pauwels states that the term Modality and by extension multimodality lacks a succinct and acknowledged definition (250). Pauwels notes that the term ‘‘mode’’ (or ‘‘modality’’), as distinct aspects of a communicative utterance or a medium is sometimes used in connection with physiological or sensory channels or capacities such as seeing (the visual mode), hearing (auditory mode), touching (tactile mode or the ‘‘haptic’’ mode when considered as aspects of a device), tasting (gustatory mode) and smelling (the olfactory mode) (250).

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Multimodality described the grammar of visual communication that is used by image designers. It is an analysis of the rules and principles that allows viewers to understand the meaning potential of the relative placement of elements, framing, salience, proximity, colour saturations, styles of typeface, etc. (ix) That is to say that Multimodality analysis not only takes different modes into account but also has a strong focus on the effects of their interplay.(250)

In broad terms, Kress states that the aim of MMDA is to elaborate tools that can provide insight into the relation of the meanings of a community and its semiotic manifestations. In MMDA, the apt use of modes for the realization of discourses in text in a specific situation is a central question. A multimodal approach assumes that language, whether as

speech or as writing, is one means among many available for representation and for making meaning. That assumes that the meanings revealed by forms of DA relying on an analysis of writing or speech are only ever 'partial' meanings. The meanings of the maker of a text as a whole reside in the meanings made jointly by all the modes in a text. If I am interested in understanding the meanings at large in a community, speech or writing – alone or even jointly – will provide a part of the meaning only (37).

However the visual mode in a broad sense includes a wide variety of expressive systems that are often not readily considered as ''visual'': the textual parts (have to be viewed or heard), typography, layout and design features. Likewise the auditory mode (spoken or sung texts, music, noises) exhibits a growing diversity of aspects and applications and a corresponding importance in website communications (250).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research will employ qualitative and qualitative study which will identify socio semiotic multimodal perspective. This perspective encompasses the non-verbal modes especially as regards emoji/emoticons in virtual communities since they (emoticons and emojis) perform the same communication style and choice.

3.2 Population, Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The sample to be used for the present study consists mainly of 114 emojis derived from chats in the virtual communities of *Whatsapp* and *Facebook.* A bulk of the emojis is adopted from *Whatsapp* and 6 major emojis employed in *Facebook*. This is achieved with the use of random sampling technique.

3.3 Methods of Data Collection

The research adopts the quantitative and qualitative methods in collection of data. The quantitative data collection methods, rely on random sampling and structured data collection instruments that fit diverse experiences into predetermined response categories. They produce results that are easy to summarize, compare, and generalize. Qualitative data collection methods play an important role in impact evaluation by providing information useful to understand the processes behind observed results and assess changes in people's perceptions of their well-being. Furthermore qualitative methods can be used to improve the quality of survey-based quantitative evaluations by helping generate evaluation hypothesis; strengthening the design of survey questionnaires and

expanding or clarifying quantitative evaluation findings. Although some preliminary quantitative results will be initially offered, a more qualitative approach to the data will be adopted given the limited size of the data to be analyzed and of their context-sensitivity

Data for the research was derived from emojipedia. Meanwhile the researcher sought for permission from the admins and members of the *Whatsapp* groups such as *Write Treasurez Bookclub*, *The Chosen Generation '14*, *Change Makers club Int'l*, *HIV/AIDS Fighters Club* (a community development group), Post Graduate Admission. Screenshots from BBNaija, and Nigeria Army recruitment respectively (*Facebook* pages) were used for the analysis. Also the researcher communicated and sought for permission from friends who are frequent users of emoji to screenshot and analyse their chats.

3.4 Techniques for Data Analysis

This research employs Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) established techniques that analyses the visual modes of images and video. Kress and Van Leuwen In doing this, believes that visual meaning can be organised from the practical meaning to a representative meaning. Such that the narrative meanings refer to the elements of an image, appear to be represented naturally and without alteration and signs represent symbolic meaning. Modalities like image/gaze and frame/social distance provide the viewer with interactive meanings, which are the visual link to interpersonal meanings, which can help identify how participants use images to relate to each other and the viewer (4).

The inspiration for the approach adopted in this study sterns from Kress and Van Leeuwen's 1996 and 2001theory of multimodality which is drawn from Halliday's metafunctional theory; they came up with ways that different semiotic modes and different visual elements are used to communicate. The three meta functions are: the ideational, interpersonal and the textual. Their meaning are as follows;

Ideational: A semiotic system has to be able to represent ideas beyond its own system of signs. So language can represent objects as being connected Machin(17). This is concerned with understanding the environment (Halliday, 1994:xiii), '(enabling) humans to make sense of what goes on around them an inside them.' Colour can denote specific people, places and things as well as classes of these (65).

Interpersonal: A semiotic system must be able to create a relation between the producer and the receiver (17). Meaning potential is realised in the communicative context. The colour red might be used in an image to create a mood of warning or romance (17).

Textual: A semiotic system must be able to form coherent wholes (18). In visual communication the colour red could be used in a composition for the colour of text headings. This shows that they are of the same order (18). A good number of the emojis in the data have the yellow colour. They are mostly yellow in colour and they coordinated to connote the shape of the sunlight which has the similitude of the human face.

Ideational	kaleidoscope of meaning Contextualization of meaning Options of meaning

	Meaning of emoji funnelled towards a preferred direction intended by members of *Whastapp* and *Facebook* virtual communities.
Interpersonal	Colour schemes Drawing style: A round shaped face Brightness Saturation Hue
Textual	Creating harmony

Diagram: Model accounting for the metafunctions in emojis

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Preamble

This chapter tends to focus on the various forms of emojis with the aim of discussing these emojis in isolation and in chat i.e context. Most importantly, it aims to conduct a multimodal analysis i.e the visual grammar of the selected emojis and to shed more light on the relevance of emoji in virtual communities. Furthermore, through the analysis of many excerpts including various emojis, this chapter will demonstrate that emojis do not mainly serve as indicators of users' emotions; rather they serve many other communicative functions. The functions such as indication of emotions, indication of approval and disapproval of others' messages, responses to thanks and compliments, conversational openings and closings, and indication of the fulfillment of a requested task can be classified under one category as they relate to expressing interpersonal meaning. This list of functions is not comprehensive and not all these functions are discrete. Emojis are "highly context-dependent, and their functions are at times complex, multi-layered and overlapped" (Darics 2013: 172).

For example, the emoji () with wide-opening eyes was used to show emotions (surprise and confusion) and to substitute for a question (what is wrong? Or what happened?). In addition, multiple emojis were used to serve the same function. For instance, the clapping hands (), the thumbs-up () and the kissing face () emojis were used to show approval. Additionally, just like words, phrases, and utterances in spoken interaction, emojis can be, as Tannen has observed, ambiguous and polysemous. Tannen (1996) asserts that "all linguistic strategies are potentially

ambiguous…and polysemous" (23). She notes, "If ambiguity denotes meaning one thing or another, polysemy denotes meaning one thing and another—that is, having multiple meanings simultaneously" (24-25)

4.2 Data Presentation

In order to discuss Emojis in isolation, it is therefore pertinent to identify the various forms of Emoji. There are eight different forms of emojis acccording to www.emojimeanings.net, namely: (1) Smiley and People (2) Animal and Nature (3) Food and Drink (4) Activity (5) Objects (6) Symbols (7) Flags (8) Travel and Places. For the purpose of this research, six forms of Emojis will be relevant and they are: Smiley and People, Animal and Nature, Object, food and drinks, travel and places and symbols. The category of people includes emojis representing people, facial expressions, and various body parts. The nature category includes emojis depicting animals, plants and water. The object category encompasses those depicting objects generally. The food and drink category includes emojis representing different kinds of food and drink. The travel and places category includes emojis depicting locations people visit and means of transportation. The last category which is symbol includes emojis representing symbols such as check marks, warning signs etc.

1. Smiley and People Category

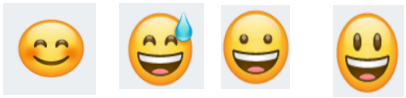


This emoji depicts a face with a smiling mouth, and a tear coming down from each eye. The tears should not be mistaken for crying; they are tears of joy and overwhelming

laughter. If used two times or more consecutively probably as a visual equivalent to the orthographic representation of continuous bursts of laughter.



It represent a face with an open mouth and bared teeth, which seems to be the most salient feature. It has small round eyes. It could represent an awkward grin. Depending on the context, it could be used to serve various functions



These emojis constitute different variants of a smiling face. They can all be interchangeably used. It seems that the smiling mouth is the salient feature in the way these emojis were used. The use of these various smiling emojis reflects individual users' preferences. Some users chose one of these smiling variants and used it consistently, whereas others used two or three of these variants interchangeably. The smiling emoji and its variants are used only to indicate happiness or to project that the person is smiling, like in face-to-face interaction. They are distinguished from a laughing emoji () or the awkward grin emoji (), which were used to indicate that the associated text is not meant seriously. In other words, the smiling emoticon is in some way equivalent to all three emoji faces: laughing, awkward grin, and smiling. This shows that while serving similar functions, emojis are much more expressive than emoticons. Here is a brief description of each Emoji:



This smiling emoji has curved eyes and a smiling closed mouth. It was often used to display happiness. However, this is not always the case; it was sometimes used to stand in for the user's face as if smiling in face-to face interaction, especially in conversation openings, closings, or when responding to a compliment.



This is the second variant of a smiling face that represents a face with a big open smiling mouth, with the teeth showing, and large oval eyes.



This variant of smiling face has a big open smiling mouth, curved or smiling eyes and a drop of sweat. It is also used mostly as a smiling face and it seems that the drop of sweat adds no meaning to the basic meaning of smiling because it was used interchangeably with the other variants of the smiling face.



This version of smiling face resembles the variant () except that it has smaller round eyes. Sometimes, one can alternate it with other smiling variants



This emoji depicts a thumbs -up sign (a fist with a thumb pointing up). It is usually used to display approval and appreciation of what someone has said or shared in the group.



This emoji represents a face with wide-open eyes, raised eyebrows, blushing cheeks and slightly open mouth. It represents the sender staring directly at the addressee. It is used to display surprise and/or confusion. It is used alone or with questions (why, what, who questions) to communicate a request for clarification or justification about what has been said or shared.



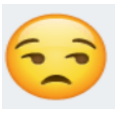
This emoji represents a face with one eye open and the second one winking. The lips are pursed blowing a small red heart. The most salient feature of this emoji is the blowing of the red heart; it can be interpreted and used as blowing a kiss.



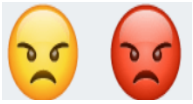
These three faces can be used interchangeably. They all share the features of a smiling face with a tongue sticking out. They differ in the size and the shape of the eyes. From the left to the right, the first emoji has small round eyes; the second one has tightly closed or scrunched eyes; and the third one has one eye closed and the other wide-open. These emojis are used mostly to cue joking or childish teasing.



This emoji represents a winking face. It can be used to cue humour or to indicate that the associated utterance was intended as a joke. It can also be used to show understanding or cuing a shared experience or knowledge with the addressee.



This emoji has a small frown, and slightly downturned curved eyebrows and mouth. It can be used to display annoyance and distress. Sometimes, can be used interchangeably with the sad () emoji to display sadness.



These two emojis represent pouting faces with a turned-down frowning mouth, narrowed eyes, and inward-facing eyebrows. Both of these faces are used to display annoyance and anger with someone or something. In addition to frowning, users attend to the red colour as a salient feature in the second face. The colour could be interpreted as showing intensity.



This emoji depicts a face with a slightly downturned mouth, small oval eyes, arched eyebrows and a tear running from one eye. The user of this emoji wants to project or display that s/he is very sad. (The teardrop seems to indicate the intensity of sadness rather than crying).



This emoji depicts a face with a small- relaxed smile, closed relaxed eyes and arched eyebrows. It is used to convey that the user is satisfied with him/herself (i.e., it displays a complacent attitude)



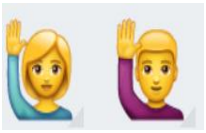
This emoji represents a face with slightly closed eyes, eyebrows, and closed mouth lifted up on one side of the face. It was used to display indifference to what has been said or done. In addition, it is sometimes used to cue sarcasm.



This emoji depicts the index finger pointing up. It was mostly used to point to an image, a video, or even a text.



This emoji represents a happy face with red heart-shaped eyes. It can be used when someone wants to express love for someone or something. It is sometimes used to replace the expression “I love you” or “I love it.”

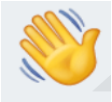


This emoji depicts a woman/man raising one arm. It can be used in greetings and conversation openings, imitating waving “hi” to someone in face-to face interaction. It is also sometimes used with text or alone to substitute for the personal pronoun “I.” This emoji can also be used to indicate interest or support in the course of a discussion.



This face has curved eyes and a big smiling mouth with the tongue sticking out at one corner of the mouth. It implies that the person has just finished eating something and is

licking his/her lips as a sign that the food was delicious. It could also be interpreted as standing in for the interjection “yummy!”



This emoji represents a waving hand. It can be used either alone or in association with “hi” or “goodbye.” This reflects how people use this gesture in face-to-face interaction to greet or say goodbye to each other.



This face has a short straight-lined mouth, closed eyes and inverted curved eyebrows. It is mainly used as a sad face. It is sometimes used interchangeably with the sad face with one teardrop (😢).



This emoji depicts a face with closed eyes, small open mouth and a series of 3 “Z” letters over the head, probably representing snoring. It is used to represent sleeping. It is mostly used in association with a textual announcement of sleeping time or concurrently with a “good night” expression. It can also be used in some instances to substitute for the verb “sleep.



This emoji represents a face with a blue forehead, small round eyes, slightly downturned curved mouth, curved eyebrows and a drop of sweat running down from one eyebrow. Depending on the context, this emoji can sometimes be used to communicate

embarrassment and sometimes to communicate disappointment. (It is not clear how the drop of sweat and blue forehead are interpreted. It could be that the drop of sweat is perceived as a result of embarrassment.)



These two emojis are used interchangeably. The first emoji (😐) represents a face with a straight closed mouth and oval eyes, while the second one (😶) represents a face with oval eyes but without a mouth. Both of these emojis were used to communicate that the user is speechless. It can mostly be used alone to substitute for the phrase, “no comment!” or “I am speechless.”



This emoji depicts a clenched fist directed toward the viewer. It can be used to represent an act of punching. That is, by using this emoji, the user is jokingly pretending that he /she is punching the addressee for saying or doing something inappropriate. Depending on the context, it can also mean a sign of agreement to what is said.



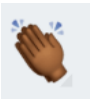
This emoji represents a face with closed eyes, round open mouth and tears streaming down from both eyes. It represents someone crying loudly. It is used to express an intensified sadness, where none of the previous sad emojis seems strong enough to express it.



This emoji represents a dancing woman/man wearing a red dress. It is used to display excitement, celebration and partying



This emoji depicts eyes looking to the left. The most straightforward usage is substituting for the word “eyes.” It is also used metaphorically to check if anyone from the group is available online; using this emoji gives the implication that the user is searching for someone. (It is like saying in spoken language, “Hello, is anybody here?”)



This emoji represents an act of clapping. It depicts two hands slapping each other producing an audible sound. It can be used to indicate celebration and excitement. It can also be used in the corpus as a sign of encouragement and acknowledgment of someone’s participation.



This emoji depicts a face with wide blank eyes, blue forehead, open screaming mouth, and two hands on cheeks. It can be used to display shock and fear because something unacceptable has been just said or happened.



This emoji depicts a hand, in which the thumb and the index finger are connected to form a circle and the other fingers are standing straight. It can used to mean, “perfect,” “excellent,” “exactly true.”



This face has closed eyes and a medical mask over the mouth. The first meaning that comes to mind when seeing this emoji is that the person using it is sick. However, it can be used to describe something that smells bad. In addition, users employed this emoji to indicate that what has been said or shared by someone is not new but is a “recycled” old piece of information (i.e., it was used and shared in the past).



This depicts a man running. It was used to convey the meaning “ I am coming” or “ I am leaving” or sometimes to replace the word “running.”. It could also mean that the user is in a hurry and needs to end the conversation.



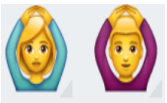
This emoji depicts a face with inward-facing eyebrows, closed eyes, frowning mouth, and steam or smoke coming from its nose. It is used to communicate frustration, annoyance and anger.



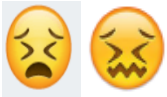
This emoji represents a smiling face wearing dark sunglasses. Someone would use this emoji if s/he wants to appear cool.



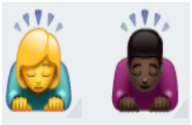
This face has small oval eyes, open mouth and raised eyebrows. It is used to display shock and disbelief.



This emoji represents a woman/man with open eyes and open mouth, putting her two hands over her head. It can be used to display that the user is overwhelmed by something.



These two emojis are used interchangeably. They both have crossed eyes, which seem to be the most salient feature, and down turned eyebrows, which seems to be the most salient feature. They differ in the shape of the mouth; the first one has a small downward curved mouth, while the second one has a kind of trembling mouth. They connote that the user is very frustrated and annoyed.



This emoji depicts a man/woman sitting with their head tilting down while resting their hands on a table or a surface. (There are small triangles pointing towards their head, but they seem to be unimportant in the way the emoji was used.) The emoji can be used to

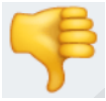
substitute for the phrase “I am waiting.” That is, it can be used to imply that the user is waiting for something from the interlocutor or waiting for something to happen.



This emoji represents an index finger pointing down. It can be used to point to an image, a video, a link, or even a text.



This emoji represents an index finger pointing up. It can be used to point to an image, a video, a link, or even a text.



This is a thumbs- down sign (a fist with a thumb pointing down to the ground); it can be used to indicate disapproval of someone or something.



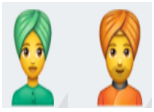
This is a thumbs- up sign. It can be used to indicate approval of someone or something.



This emoji depicts a man’s arm flexed showing a bicep muscle. It can be used to signal that someone is strong and healthy. It is also used as a signal of celebratory affirmation.



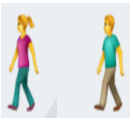
This emoji depicts the head of a baby. It can be used literally to mean a baby or a small child and also used metaphorically to describe someone as behaving childishly. Also, it can be used to describe an idea in its infancy or chiding a clumsy friend.



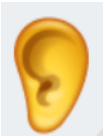
This emoji depicts a man/woman's face with a turban on their head. It can be used it to represent an Indian person or represent sometimes a Sudanese man/woman. This is because both Indians (specifically Sikhs) and Sudanese wear turbans.



This emoji depicts a face with closed eyes, downturned eyebrows, and open downturned mouth. t can be used to communicate that the user is exhausted.



This emoji depicts a man/woman walking. It can be used as a substitute for the word "walking." In addition, it can be used as a display of walking as an action.



This emoji depicts a single human ear. By using this emoji, the user indicates that she/he is listening or paying attention to what the other party wants to say. It can especially be used as a response to someone who prefaces his or her participation by sending, "I want to say something." Thus, a typical response including this emoji would be, "go ahead"

2. Animal and Nature Category



This emoji depicts a single red rose. It can be used when complimenting or responding to a compliment.



This emoji depicts the face of a green frog.



This represents a yellow chick hatching from an egg. It could stand for recommencement, cuteness or the birth of a baby.



This emoji depicts a bouquet consisting of a bunch of colorful flowers. It can be used to indicate celebration. It is meant to express congratulations and acknowledgment. It is also a sign of nature.



This emoji represents a monkey covering its mouth with both hands. It can be used when the user realizes that he/she has said something embarrassing.

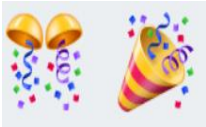


This emoji depicts a monkey covering its eyes with its hands. It can be used to indicate that the user feels embarrassed or shy.



This emoji depicts 3 water drops. It represent rain and can sometimes replace water.

3. Object Category



The first emoji is a depiction of a confetti ball burst open. It indicates celebration while the second one emoji depicts a colorful party popper. It can be used with the other emoji as a display of partying and celebration.



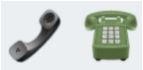
This emoji depicts a dartboard with a dart hitting the center. It can be used metaphorically to indicate what someone said was to the point or addressed the core issue. A green arrow right in the dashboard's bullseye is also used to indicate a dart game.



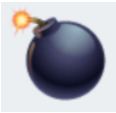
The alarm clock often serves as a reminder or to indicate a deadline or urgency



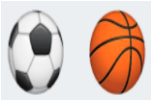
This emoji represents a gun. It can be used jokingly to indicate a threat.



These two emojis are of a landline telephone and a telephone receiver. They can be used together to substitute for “phone calls.”



This emoji represents a bomb. It can be used along with the word “explode.” It could also mean anger or very tense feeling on the side of the chat partner.



The first emoji represents a ball used in soccer games while the second emoji represent a ball used in a basketball game. Both can co-occurred with the word “soccer ball” and “basketball”



Gear emoji symbolically shows that something should be fueled or set in motion



The flashlight emoji can mean “There is no electricity”, “You are being x-rayed”, or “I know the truth”. It is also used to camping and night walks.



This is a gem stone emoji. It could mean “You are everything to me and as precious as a diamond.



The buckler emoji conveys protection and security.



This emoji present a letter sealed with heart. A love letter with heartfelt loving message.

4. Food and Drink Category



This emoji represents a slice of watermelon. This emoji could be a promise of bliss of love



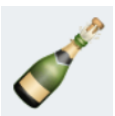
The sweet pineapple is a symbol of cordiality and hospitality. It is meant to express joy in life and self-awareness.



This tomato emoji could mean love. It can be understood as a subtle message of a secret new love.



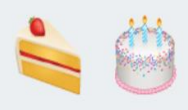
For many cultures, the banana is a delicacy and part of a healthy diet. It could also be a sign for fertility or a phallic symbol.



This emoji represents a bottle of wine. It could be used when something calls for celebration.



These emojis represents glasses of wine respectively. They can be used to indicate that one is having a good time and the other chat partner is invited to join.



The first emoji represents a piece of a cake, while the second one represents a whole birthday cake. They can be used together alongside a happy birthday wish.

5. Symbols Category



These two emojis represents a white check mark and a white cross mark in green boxes. The first one (✅) is used to indicate that a certain piece of information is correct, while (❎) is used to indicate the opposite.



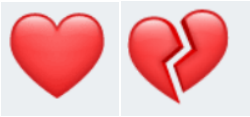
This emoji depicts a series of the letter “Z.” It can be used to represent sleeping or snoring.



Where this emoji is used, it means the content of the message, picture, video etc, is not meant for people who are under the age of 18years. Highly prohibited for people who are not up to 18years of age.



This emoji is an assurance of the message it follows. It is an indication that what the other party said or posted is nothing but the undiluted truth.



The first emoji symbolizes the infinite passion coupled with the red colour. It could also mean someone is in love with something or the other party. While the second emoji indicates the opposite. It represents a heart break, disappointment, sadness or suffering.



The blue heart emoji signifiesconfidence. It could also represent the deeply felt friendship and loyalty between the two parties.



The kneeling person under a roof symbolizes a place of prayer. This could be a church or a mosque.



This emoji shows a smartphone which is muted and merely vibrates. This could mean a request not to disturb.

6. Travel and Places Category



Obviously, this is a hospital. It could be a metaphor indicating an accident, strong discomfort or the person has been hospitalized.



This emoji present a side view of a police car. It could serve a warning of an illegal intent or action.



The plane emoji can mean “I am traveling by air”

4.3 Communicative Functions of Emojis

“The fact that English alone is proving insufficient to meet the needs of 21st-century digital communication is a huge shift,” says Caspar Grathwohl. This confirms the fact that language and communication has changed over recent years and we need to wake to up to the reality of the shift in written language. Additionally, he said “When you look back at the year in language, one of the most striking things was that, in terms of written communication, the most ascendant aspect of it was not a word at all, it was emoji culture.” Thus, emojis have become a way to convey the tone and non-verbal context behind our texts**.**

Sometimes a message seems so dry, but when full of faces (emojis) will make it easier to understand the tone and facilitating the understanding. Emojis are gradually replacing words we send to each other digitally. After identifying the various forms of emojis, it is

therefore germane to explore the communicative functions it performs. Each function will be accompanied with samples of chat for further analysis of how those functions come to play. The emojis chosen for this analysis are those frequently used by users and there are two (2) examples for each category.

4.3.1 Indicating Emotions

Emojis are seen as apt representations of feelings, emotions and the mood of the people inter-communicating with each other. Love, happiness, surprise, sadness, fear, disgust, anger etc. all forms emotions emoji could help us convey using lesser words.

Example 1

Interlocutor 1: I know everything will be fine soon

Let's just keep the hope alive

Interlocutor 2: Definitely

No other choice na (Means There's no other choice)

Interlocutor 1: ✌🏿

Yeah

Interlocutor 2: Miss you sha (Means Miss you though)

Interlocutor 1: Hope you do hear from your sis?

Same here dear. 😘

Can't wait to see your prettie face again 😘😘😘😘😘

From the conversation, it is evident that Interlocutor 1and 2 are good friends but they haven't seen each other for a while. Interlocutor 1 emotions was spurred when

Interlocutor 2 said “Miss you sha”. Interlocutor 1then represented his feelings of anticipation with the emoji () which depict the red heart and blowing of kiss. With lesser words, the feelings of Interlocutor 1has been couched in that emoji that portrayed the symbol of love and that of a kiss at the same time.

Example 2

The post graduate group shares group link on other social media platform for intending P.G applicants to join. But most often, people abuse this privilege when they see such link, they turn it to an avenue to market their product. They engage themselves in spamming, most members of this group finds this annoying. They call the attention of the group administrator to it when such case arises.

Interlocutor 1: I don’t trust people joining via the group link. 

The next thing is Bitcoin is paying

Interlocutor2: Lol…and they get deleted (In response to what Interlocutor 1 said)

It is a common thing among open groups on *Whatsapp* where members can join via links posted online. Some people will voluntarily join the group not because they have anything to do with the group but to constitute nuisance. They flood such groups with unsolicited messages/posts. Interlocutor 1 couldn’t conceal his disgust for such attitude more so when he noticed people were joining the group via the group link. He captured his disgust with this emoji (). However, interlocutor 2 reassured interlocutor 1 of swift disciplinary action that will follow.

4.3.2 Indicating Approval or Disapproval

The communicative functions of emojis in our contemporary era transcends mere expression of emotions. It can also be used to indicate approval or disapproval to what is being said. In the example below, we shall explore this aspect of communicative function.

Example 1

Interlocutor 1: Like seriously, I have just decided to reserve my picture for some time. The way people are busy disturbing me eh, you will think something else is attached to it. So am keeping a silent profile on social media for now. 

Interlocutor 2: Nice 

Here, Interlocutor 1explained the reason behind his decision not to upload his pictures on *Whatsapp*, probably as Display Picture (Popular known as DP) or as status update as a result of the disturbance that follows. Hence, Interlocutor 1 is keeping a noiseless profile to avoid "disturbance" from friends and family. Interlocutor 2 in return is not against such decision and without any objections, we see the sign of endorsement given by Interlocutor 2 as represent with the thumbs up emoji (). This emoji functions similarly to the "like" button on *Facebook* and other social network services in allowing users to show their agreement and appreciation in the context of usage.

Example 2

In the Post Graduate group, one of the group members reminded fellow members on the need to keep each other abreast of any scholarship and study grant they come across individually. The group was formed to discuss Post Graduate Admission into one of the

renowned Universities in Nigeria. Information, they say is power, so anyone with useful information about scholarship and study grants should be kind enough to share for the benefit of other fellow group members. Here is the chat:

Interlocutor 1: Please let's keep ourselves abreast on scholarships and study grants as time dey go (Means Lets keep ourselves abreast on scholarships and study grants as time waits for no man)

Interlocutor 2: 👍 (In agreement to what Interlocutor 1 posted)

Interlocutor 3: 👍👍👍 (In agreement to what Interlocutor 1 posted)

Interlocutor 4: Perfect! (In agreement to what Interlocutor 1 posted)

From the above, we can see that both Interlocutor 1 and 2 were able to express their approval as to what interlocutor posted. Interlocutor used just one thumbs up 👍 emoji while the second interlocutor used three thumbs up 👍👍👍 emojis to express his full approval to what was posted.

Example 3: (Indicating Disapproval)

Interlocutor 1: Hello, should I pour the eggs directly

Interlocutor 2: 👎 break in a smaller plate and whisk before pouring it

Interlocutor 1: Thank God I asked you

Interlocutor 2: I'll join you soonest

Interlocutor 2 uses the thumbs down to indicate disapproval of the process about to be carried out by interlocutor 1.

4.3.3 Emojis as a Response to Thanking and Compliments

This function refers to the use of emojis in response to thanking and compliments. In other words, emojis are sometimes used alone to substitute for an expected verbal response to a thank-you expression. The first example here featured several interlocutors expressing their gratitude for a post from a member of one of the groups consulted for this research.

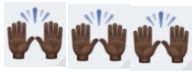
Example 1

Interlocutor 1: Rather than shaming and condemning an already deeply stigmatized group, we collectively, can embrace them – not necessarily their behavior, but them – their humanness. Michelle Alexander

Interlocutor 2: 

Keep it up

Interlocutor 3: Nice

Interlocutor 1:  (In response to Interlocutor 2 said)

Interlocutor 4: Hmmm!!. So true 

Welldone 

Interlocutor 1: Gracias  (In response to what Interlocutor 4 said)

Interlocutor 5: 

A brief background knowledge of what the group represents will reveal to us why Interlocutor 1 posted the above quote from Michelle Alexander. The group is set out to combat the menace of HIV/AIDS in the community through consistent sensitization and

free HIV/AIDS counselling and testing. They preach against stigmatization and also encourage abstinence. Following the various responses from the chat above, we can say Interlocutor 1,2,3,4 and 5 have been able to express their gratitude for such a beautiful post from interlocutor 1. They have done this in their unique ways by picking different emoji to express themselves. This is a confirmation that the choice of a certain variant of an emoji depends on individuals' preferences. Interlocutor 2 employed the thumbs up () emoji while interlocutor was overwhelmed, employing the () emoji and later thanked interlocutor 1 for the wonderful post with the () emoji which could also signify encouragement. Same emoji employed by interlocutor 5 to serve the same purpose.

Example 2

The chat for this example was culled from the Post Graduate group we mentioned earlier. Interlocutor 1 posted a Prospectus that will guide members to make the right choice and to expose them to what the course they have chosen entails.

Interlocutor 1: See this

(Note: A pdf file named *Prospectus* followed this)



Interlocutor 2: Pls anyone with computer science question?

Interlocutor 3: For all the courses? (Quoting the file interlocutor 1 posted)

Interlocutor 1: Yea (Replying interlocutor 3)

Interlocutor 4: Okay. Thanks Bro. (Response to what Interlocutor 1 posted)

Interlocutor 3: Thank you sir. (Replying what Interlocutor 1 said last "Yea")

Interlocutor 5: Thanks for this Mr M.J 🙏🙏

Emojis can serve diverse functions, although it application depends largely on the user and the context of usage. In the example above, Interlocutor 1 who is the group administrator posted a prospectus worth 102 pages for the benefit of all the group members. Interlocutor 1 made use of emoji representing an index finger pointing up () to complement the first post "See this". Some group members registered their appreciation without the use of emoji but interlocutor employed an emoji (🙏🙏) to show appreciation for the useful file posted by the group administrator.

4.3.4 Signaling Openings and Closings of Conversations

Opening of Conversation

In this extract, Interlocutor 1 initiated a chat with Interlocutor 2 but with a different approach. Interlocutor 1 introduced an emoji to get the attention of Interlocutor 2.

Example 1

Interlocutor 1: 

Are you there?

Interlocutor 2: Yes

Interlocutor 1: Good morning

How was your night?

Interlocutor 2: Good.

Yours?

This emoji, in this context, implies a loud call to Interlocutor 2 followed by the question "Are you there? The emoji which represent a loud call probably means a loud call incase Interlocutor 2 might not be anywhere close to the phone. Although Interlocutor 2 may not feel the gravity of the call but the emoji has conveyed the intended meaning. The prompt response from Interlocutor 2 showed the positive effect of the emoji. Aside the above emoji, there are other emojis that could serve same purpose. They include:  ,  etc. The first one could serve could mean same function as  while the second emoji  could imply that the user is checking if the other user is online.

Closing of Conversations

The conversation that ensued between Interlocutor 1 and Interlocutor 2 is a perfect sample of how emojis can be used to close conversation

Example 1

Interlocutor 1: Thanks for being there ma.

Interlocutor 2: You always welcome dear.

Interlocutor 2: Have you started working?

Interlocutor 1: Nope, still trusting God.

Interlocutor 2: It's well with you. God will provide ok.

Interlocutor 1: Amen. Thanks ma.

Interlocutor 2: You welcome

Interlocutor 1: 

Closing a conversation with another user doesn't necessarily have to be the usual norm of typing "bye bye" but can take a different form as seen in the sample above. Another interesting example worthy of note is given below:

Example 2

Interlocutor 1: Finally.

You ran away

Common, you deserve some accolades.

Interlocutor 2: Before nko

Yes o..I do

Interlocutor 1: Lol.

It's alright

They will transfer you back to Abuja

Say Amen 

Interlocutor 2: 

I hear you

Interlocutor 1: Haha

You can't even say amen. 

Your love for Ibadan is something else

Interlocutor 2: 

Interlocutor 1: Issorai (Meaning It's alright)

Your transfer letter is waiting for you

You will get it tomorrow

Interlocutor 2: 

Following the conversation between Interlocutor 1 and 2 above, it is obvious that Interlocutor 2 ended the chat with Interlocutor 1 on a friendly note. In order to avoid what may appear as a change of mood, Interlocutor 2 then decided to end the with a funny emoji (😊) just to lighten discussion.

As stated earlier, the choice of a certain variant of an emoji depends on individuals' preferences. For example, a user might choose (😊), while another might choose (🤦‍♀️) to close a conversation or something else entirely.

4.3.5 Indicating Celebration

Celebration is part of our everyday life, it ranges from birthday, naming, graduation, wedding, to mention but a few. Certain emojis can be used to convey the mood of party, celebrate with others etc.

Example 1

Interlocutor 1: Happy birthday sweetheart. More grace



Interlocutor 2: THANKS 😂

Interlocutor 1used the emoji of colorful party popper in celebrating the birthday of interlocutor 2 who seems to be overwhelmed with tears of joy.

4.3.6 Emojis as Indicators of Fulfilling a Requested Task

Emojis are employed as easy and fast techniques to indicate that a receiver has performed a task. The use of emojis in this way does not reflect what these emojis literally represent or refer to. The post graduate group provided the right chat for our analysis. A group

member asked the group admin to carry out an action, and when it was done, he signified by the use of an emoji.

Example 1

Interlocutor 1: Hello Admin! Pls add this contact 080*******98. Thanks

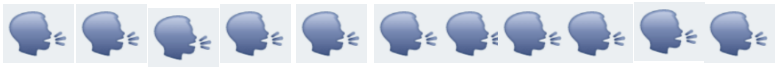
(Few mins later, the notice came up that Admin has added the above number in this format "*Admin added 080********98")*

Interlocutor 2: 

The group admin serves as the Interlocutor 2. He didn't waste time to do exactly what he was asked to do. In order to report back that he has completed the task, he employed the thumbs up () emoji as indicator.

Example 2:

This instance happened in same Post graduate group where a member posted something contrary to what the group represent. The attention of the group admin was called to it and quick disciplinary action was taken.

Interlocutor 1: 

****

Get Rich Naija

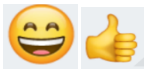
NEWLY LAUNCHED! NEWLY LAUNCHED!! NEWLY LAUNCHED!!!

I just joined this new platform that gives you double of your donation in less than 24hrs and I have been paid. These are the packages. Donate 5k and get 10k. Donate 10k and get 20k. Donate 20k and get 40k, Donate 50k and get 100k. Donate 100k and get 200k. Donate 150k and get 300k. All within 24hrs.

Interlocutor 2: Ponzi 

Interlocutor 3: Please this kind of post is not allowed here.

Interlocutor 4: He has been taken care of. (Note: This was after the admin removed interlocutor 1)

Interlocutor 5: Thank you 

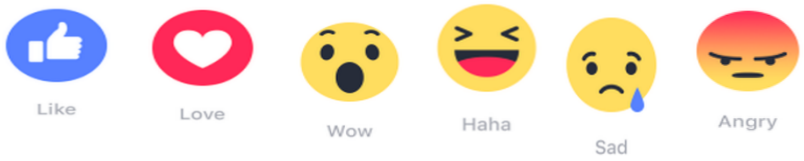
What interlocutor did is known as spamming, he ought to know the implication of that as a member of the group. Interlocutor 2 couldn't believe a member can be silly enough to post such nonsense. Then, interlocutor 3 came on board to remind interlocutor 1 that spamming isn't allowed here and should be ready to face the consequences. Not long after, interlocutor 4 announced that he has been taken care of (note that this happened after the admin, who is interlocutor 4 has removed the defaulter. His removal couldn't be captured in the chat but the notification came up that he has been removed. Interlocutor 5 employed two emojis to first express his joy () for the prompt action taken and also thanked () the admin for a job well done.

What Type of Utterance Preceed Emojis

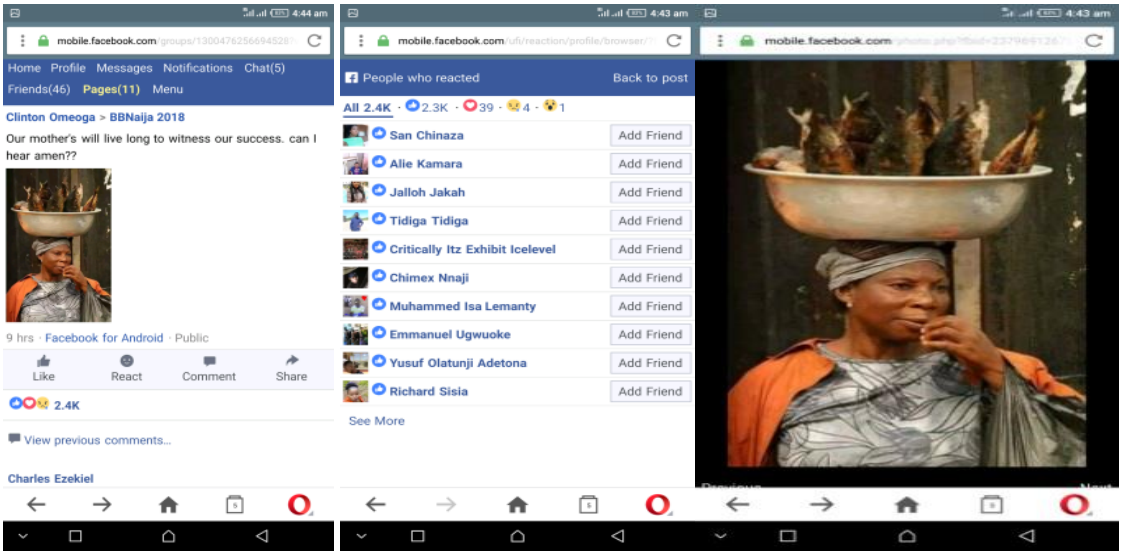
Facebook

A lot of items not just utterance ranging from pictures, advertisements, gist/gossips on entertainment, politics, etc preceeds/attracts emojis on *Facebook*. When it comes to the use of emojis/emoticons facebook, an American online social media and social networking service is not an exemption. Facebook reactions, released in February 2016, are an extension of the old "Like" button. Its six options (Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad and Angry) are represented by slightly edited versions of several long-established Unicode Emojis, and they allow for a more nuanced expression of how interlocutors feels towards a post. These emojis allows you to react to posts with six different animated

emotions. The six reactions will be carefully examined and random generated samples will aid our analysis.

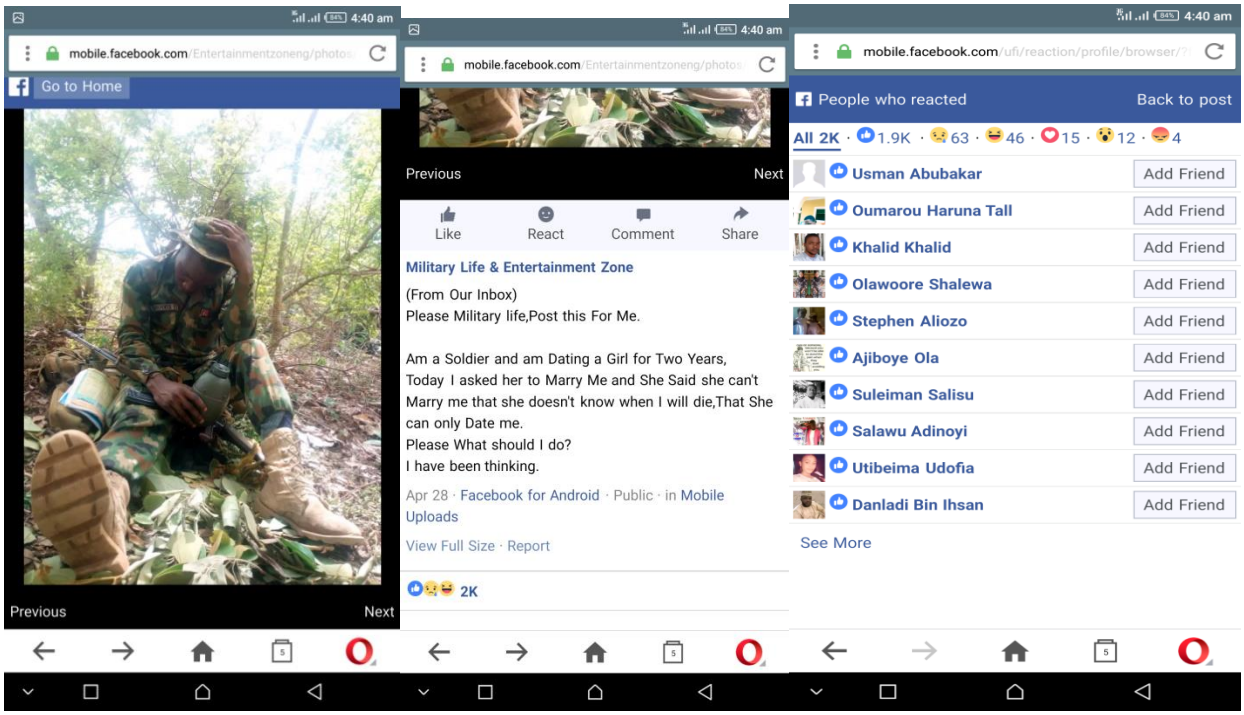


Example 1: The sample below depicts a poor woman selling fish with a short utterance.



For the above sample, 2,400 interlocutors reacted to the message with the like emoji, 39 interlocutors reacted with the love emoji, 4 interlocutors reacted with the sad emoji and 1 interlocutor reacted with the wow emoji.

Example 2: The sample below depicts a Nigerian Military officer who seems tired of the military life. The girl he is dating is not willing to marry him because of the risk attached to his profession.



For the above sample, 2,000 interlocutors reacted to the message with the like emoji,63 interlocutors reacted with a sad emoji, 46 interlocutors reacted with a Haha emoji, 15 interlocutors reacted with the love emoji, 12 interlocutors reacted with the wow emoji and 1 interlocutor reacted with the angry emoji.

4.4 Multimodal Analysis

The emoji ☺ (smileys) may point us in the direction of lightheartedness, but even among speakers from similar cultures, irony and sarcasm are always possibilities. Multimodality of smileys is discussed in this paper using the sub-headings of visual grammar and colour (brightness, saturation and hue)

The symbols and the pictures that are used in the emoji have different colours, and these colours provide the best support for the representation of the emotions and the facial expressions. The usage of the appropriate colours and the style is an important indication

of the effectiveness of the emoji. The body and skin colours are used in those symbols and the pictures are related to the human body. The use of the skin colour is significant and promising because it must match with the reflection of facial expressions.

Visual Grammar

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) points out that there are some relationships between the image and the language, yet the image is not dependent on the language explanation for itself has its own structure and organization. The image itself could produce the representational meaning, interactive meaning, symbolic meaning and compositional meaning. The interpreting of image is arbitrary to some extent and in different context there would be different interpretation. The language explanation makes the concrete image more specific and it also can reflect the meaning of the image more clearly. At the same time, the image makes the content of language more vivid. Therefore, the combination of language and image which are both a kind of social semiotic, would communicate meaning more comprehensively and efficiently Yang (5). In Reading Images (1996) we discussed 'framing' as specific to visual communication. By 'framing' we meant , in that context , the way elements of a visual composition may be disconnected, marked off from each other , for instance by frame lines, pictorial framing devices (boundaries formed by the edge of a building, a tree, etc.), empty space between elements, discontinuities of colour , and so on. The concept also included the ways in which elements of a composition maybe connected to each other, through the absence of disconnection devices, through vectors, and through continuities and similarities of colour, visual shape and so on. In Visual Grammar, there are three categories of modality: high modality, middle modality and low modality. Van Leeuwen (2005) put

forwards several modality markers to judge how real an image is. Each modality marker is a continuum which includes two extremes: the highest modality and the lowest modality. For example, in terms of colour saturation, the neutral saturation expresses the highest modality while either full colour saturation or black and white expresses the lowest modality Yang (4).The significance is that disconnected elements will be read as, in some sense, separate and independent , perhaps even as contrasting units of meaning, whereas connected elements will be read as belonging together in some sense, as continuous or complementary ….As it is known, the sign that conveys its meaning through its pictorial resemblance to a physical object is a pictogram. Thus, emoticons can be viewed as pictograms formed with graphemes – the smallest units of the graphic form defined by their function in written communication Anis as cited in Amaghlobeli (349). As regards its physical appearance, the "smiley" features a rounded form, which was probably functional to its original material realization as a pin button and that recalls the conceptual symbolic representation of a human face. The absence of perspective and the frontal angle 'demand' the viewers to enter into a friendly relationship (Kress/van Leeuwen 2006 [1996]: 145). The friendship of the invitation is visually marked by the expression of the abstract face, where the smiling mouth (especially in Ball's original design) represents the most salient element in terms of proportions.

Colour Scheme

Suffice to say with reference to David Machin that colour is an important semiotic resource that can be studied systematically. Looking for the regularities and patterns in the use of colours and its quality can answer questions about the meaning of colours. Colour or visual language can fulfil any of the metafunctions hence function as a system.

There are regularities and patterns in the use of colours and of colour qualities (63). Colour is deliberately used by sign makers, although they themselves will usually speak in terms of artistic and instinctual reasons for use rather than of colour as a semiotic resource which has more or less predictable meaning potentials.(63). Colours can affect how we feel subconsciously. While colour use might seem chaotic or based on aesthetic decisions, it is used by sign makers deliberately, although they themselves will usually speak in terms of artistic and instinctual reasons for use rather than of colour as a semantic resource which has more or less predictable meaning potential. Emoji use skin tones drawn from the Fitzpatrick scale, which is a recognized tool for dermatological research about skin colour. It consists of six types:

Type I: Pale white

Type II: White; fair.

Type III: Cream white.

Type IV: Moderate brown

Type V: Dark brown

Type VI: Dark brown to black and deeply pigmented.

The feeling behind meaning of the colors sees hues grouped into two main groups commonly known as warm colors and cool colors.

Colour Meaning

Red Colour Meaning – The colour of passion. This colour attracts the most attention and is associated with strong emotions such as love as depicted on the happy face emoji with the shape of love taking the position of the eyes and anger as seen in the angry face emoji

Yellow Colour Meaning – The colour of Optimism. Yellow is a compelling colour that conveys youthful, fresh energy. This colour of sunshine is uplifting and illuminating and associated with success and confidence. Most of the facial emojis under the category of people have this FFCC22, according to ColorHexa. Yellow as a more saturated colour is emotionally intense, bold and adventurous. The hue of yellow Brightness, saturation and hue as evident in most of the emojis provided in the data creates a sense of optimism, emotions and sensuality.

Blue Colour Meaning– The colour of trust. Blue, the shade of the sea and the sky, is thought to induce calm and convey tranquillity, serenity and peace. The tear drops on the emojis all have blue colour.

Brown Colour Meaning – The colour of the earth. Stability and a solid foundation is the message that emanates from the colour brown. This colour relates to things that are natural and simple. Brown is thought to be dull, but is reliable and wholesome. Although frugal and stingy, brown is a colour of safety and quiet confidence; warm and reassuring.

4.5 Relevance of Emojis in the Chats

The use of emojis in *Whatsapp* chats and *Facebook* represents a sort of shift from verbal to a more or less pictorial representation of meaning. As it is the case with other non-verbal elements emojis are capable of supplementing a verbal context. The attributes of the images facilitate the flow of semantic properties.

4.6 Discussions and findings

The diversity of the emoji symbols is needed to have focus. It is necessary that the emotions exist in diverse manner. They are not only limited to joy, sorrow, grief,

happiness or any other a common form of symbols. Therefore, in today's era different kinds of emojis are being used in the communication and they are effective enough to provide an effective stance to convey the message. Besides the importance of the emoji, it is also important to use the emoji at the right time. The use of the emoji and its effectiveness is also subject to the emotions and the right pictorial depiction. Therefore, the timing of the use of the emoji is important as well as the place.As can be observed, the users in *Facebook* community opt for a rather limited selection of emoticons, where the "like" is by far the most frequent.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

Huffaker and Calvert (2005) and Wolf (2000) assert that emoticons are context-sensitive. Thus, depending on the local context in which they are used, some emojis are multifunctional as they serve various purposes. Emoticons may thus enhance the exchange of social information by providing additional social cues beyond what is found in the text of a message. Therefore they may improve the communication. The fact that emoticons are used, implies that individuals at least feel the need to express some of their emotions with short symbols rather than text (Fischer, 2004). It can be concluded that social context influences the use of emoticons.

The importance of the emojis cannot be overemphasised. It is believed that the use of the emoji is good to express the feelings that are quite difficult to state in text expressions. Emojis show feelings because they express emotions which make them important. We often times witness in our day to day lives the message conveyance. Emojis suggest that an emotional communication is as significant as using words. By using smileys, readers can understand the message the sender is trying to convey. The use of the smileys and other symbols are imperative in our everyday lives to demonstrate effective communication. That is why more often the smiley signs are used in a time of happiness, an important advancement in communication. The emoji are the most powerful tools to facilitate the communication and allows people to express their linguistic capabilities. The people understand their linguistic cues, and they use emoji in that context. Hence, the

emojis are the powerful tools to demonstrate the freedom of expression and the nonverbal cues in our daily textual language.

In addition, there is a further value to emojis which underlines that they are an evolution of old language forms. This is their universal nature. Although there are some cultural variations in the way that emojis are used, their increasing ubiquity around the world suggests that they may be a way to avoid, or at least reduce, cross-culture misunderstanding. Note that age is not necessarily an indicator of emoji use, although technology acceptance may be. There are however some cultural variations in the popularity and usage of certain emojis, despite a high level of universality. These would need to be examined in greater detail to identify what leads to these cultural variations in emoji use. Emojis can moreover, be considered to have a role as a language form in their own right and with a genealogy that dates back to the early language of humans depicted in cave paintings and other art forms that pre-date written information.

The uses of the emoji are worldwide and the representation of the emotions by the people is evident in every culture and the environment. The emoji is also the reflection of the specific culture of the country. Emojis provide the appearance of the facial expressions and emotions that are specific to each culture. For instance, the Japanese companies have also produced the symbols that are particularly related to the culture of the Japanese and they are not subject to the reflection of the emotions of the whole world. Therefore, the role of the diversity of the culture is essential and the emojis have a profound impact on the life of the people. Emojis provide nonverbal cues and they are lessened dependence on the written words. Emojis have taken control over nonverbal communication and are changing our language and shifting vocabulary in terms of how we communicate to

others. For instance, emojis change our facial expressions as we try to match the emotion of emojis.

It can be said that the actual states of mind of the people are also subject to change after some time. Therefore, the change in human emotions is also subject to the change in the reflection of the pictorial depiction. This fluctuation in emotions proves that one cannot express a similar condition of state of mind at all times. Emotions must change to reflect the internal feelings of the people. Therefore, the emoji comes in handy in that way and provides an excellent representation of the condition. Our brains are responding to the new discovery of emojis as if it is a real human face.

The fact is that language is always evolving and a large number of people rely upon the use of the emoji to show their expressions, emotions, feelings, and appreciation in real-time. Due to this, people on social media are always prone to the use of emojis in their daily lives. The reliance on the emoji is prominent because they are the true reflectors of the use of the pictorials in real life to provide the right level of accuracy of the detection of the language. Therefore, the need of the pictorial facial expression is evident in our daily lives (20). Humans are nothing if there is no social interaction among the individuals. It can be said that the communication and the language are linked with each other. If that bond becomes weak, it is problematic for people to interact with each other.

The role of the communication and the talking through emojis is crucial as the use of the emoji is so powerful and popular in our daily lives. They are the true reason that one can make use of such emoji to show his or her emotional concern and bonds with other people in the society. The emoji have power to increase the level of good communication that always requires social intimacy in our daily lives. People build this by increasing the

quantity of our social and daily communication. This is done through the disclosure of the personal information which is used in our daily communication patterns. This was once thought quite impossible in the context of the social intimacy. However, this is now widespread throughout social circles, and with the use of computer mediated communication in our daily lives. With the help of advanced technology, it takes just a couple of seconds to share important facts with someone in the societies and the individuals. Therefore, communication through social circles is appropriate. Accordingly, we must also share our feelings and emotions with that person. Therefore, communication is an integral part of how we build and maintain relationships with people and communities. At this time, the emoji allow us to communicate freely and smoothly. In addition, face-to-face communication is easier to understand, because one can read emotion on people's faces. One can know what he or she mean, better. In that situation, it is important to use emoji. This is also called the adequate level of the emotional contagion that is present and it is all included in the part of how we are prone to build that social connectedness in our societies and the people.

Emoji comes in handy and resolve the issue in that context. They provide powerful freedom of speech and the way we speak with each other. Today is the era of great communication revolution. The communication patterns are evolving as people utilize verbal and nonverbal communication strategies in their everyday lives. The evolution of communication requires that there should be some sort of communication symbols that are presented in day to day correspondence to engage in conversations that is worthy of an understanding and the recognition. That is why, the use of the emoji in non-verbal communication is steadily increasing in popularity and the large numbers of people are

using such emoji in their communication. In past, the communication among the people was not as easy. Today, the use of the internet and other means of the communication are so easy and approachable. Therefore, it is quite important to make sure that the verbal communication has been lessened and the use of the emoji is playing an important role in the conveying of the messages.

Despite these strong positives for the use of emojis, there remains a perception in some quarters that their use is a lesser form of language and is devaluing and devolving language. However, these concerns are not only unfounded but they ignore human needs for non-verbal information within their communications.

5.2 Recommendations

i. The researcher recommends that more researchers especially those in Nigeria and Africa go into this novel exploration of emojis and emoticons.

ii. The researcher also recommends that users of emoji in various virtual communities keeps embracing its use as it saves time and its pictorial representation comes handy.

iii. Furthermore, the researcher recommends the use of emoji because it doesn't only depict human emotions, they also represent various situations, objects, human, symbols and places.

iv. The researcher recommends the use of emoji as it amplify all types of emotions and any message we want to transmit. Thus, the expressive power of emoji is such, that their presence can multiply the impact of our message greatly.

v. Finally, the researcher recommends that the use of emoji could express more delicate feelings beyond plain texts and thus smoothen the communications between interlocutors.

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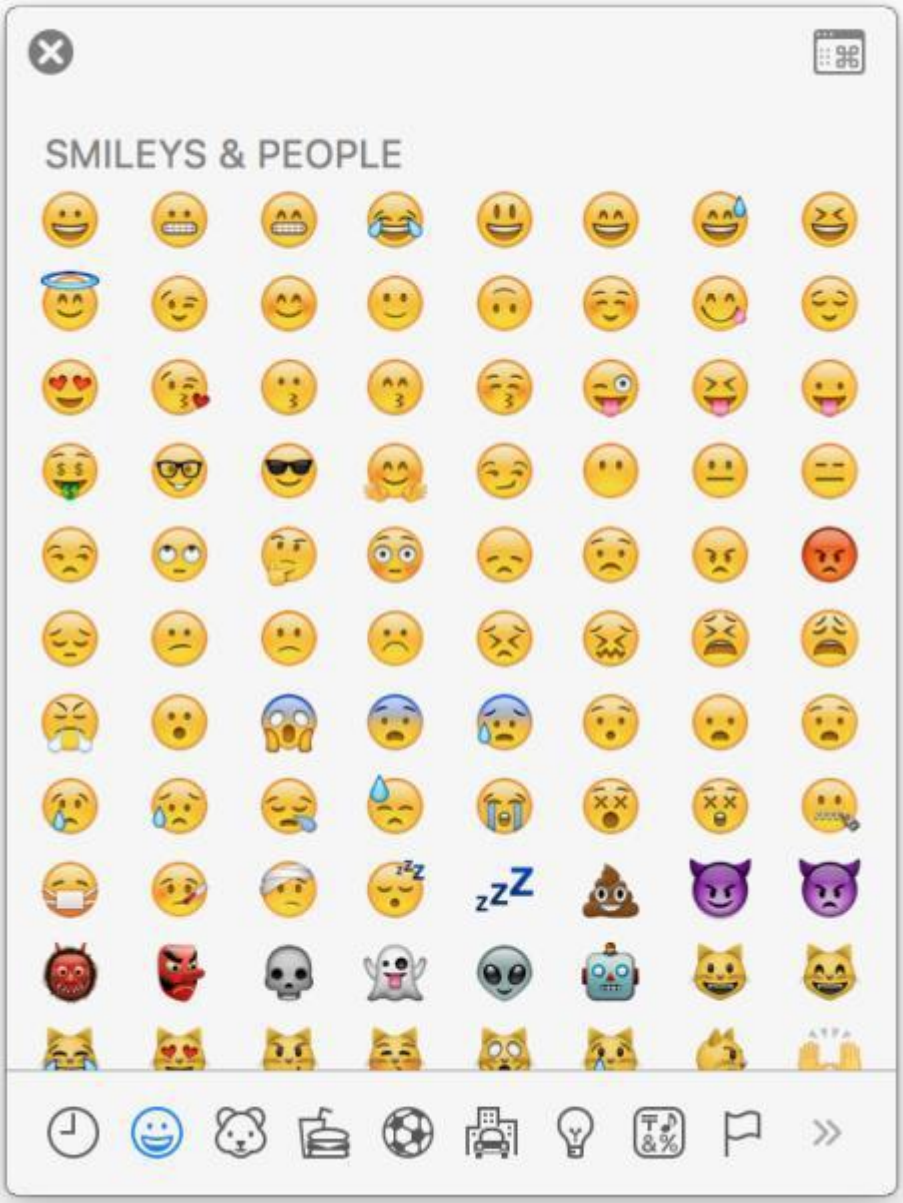
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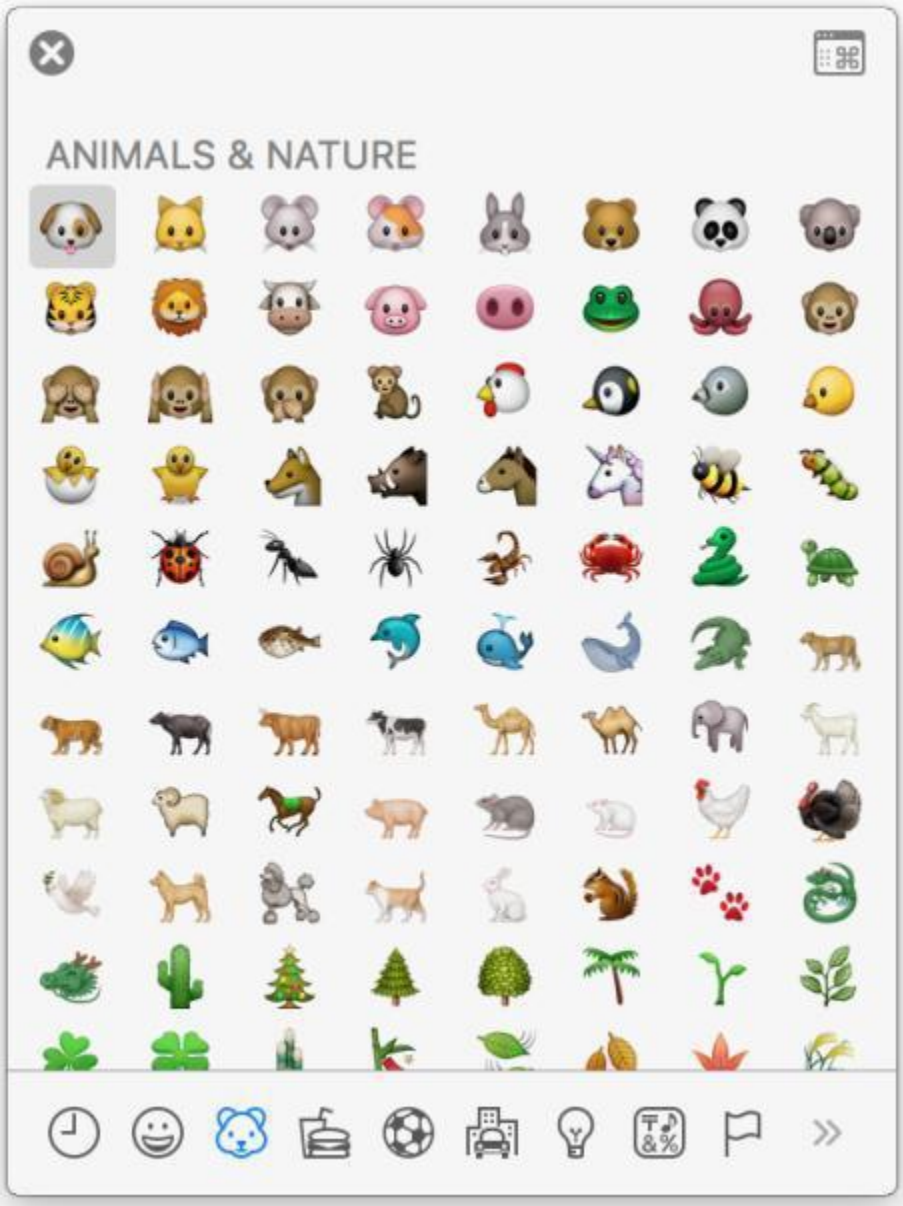
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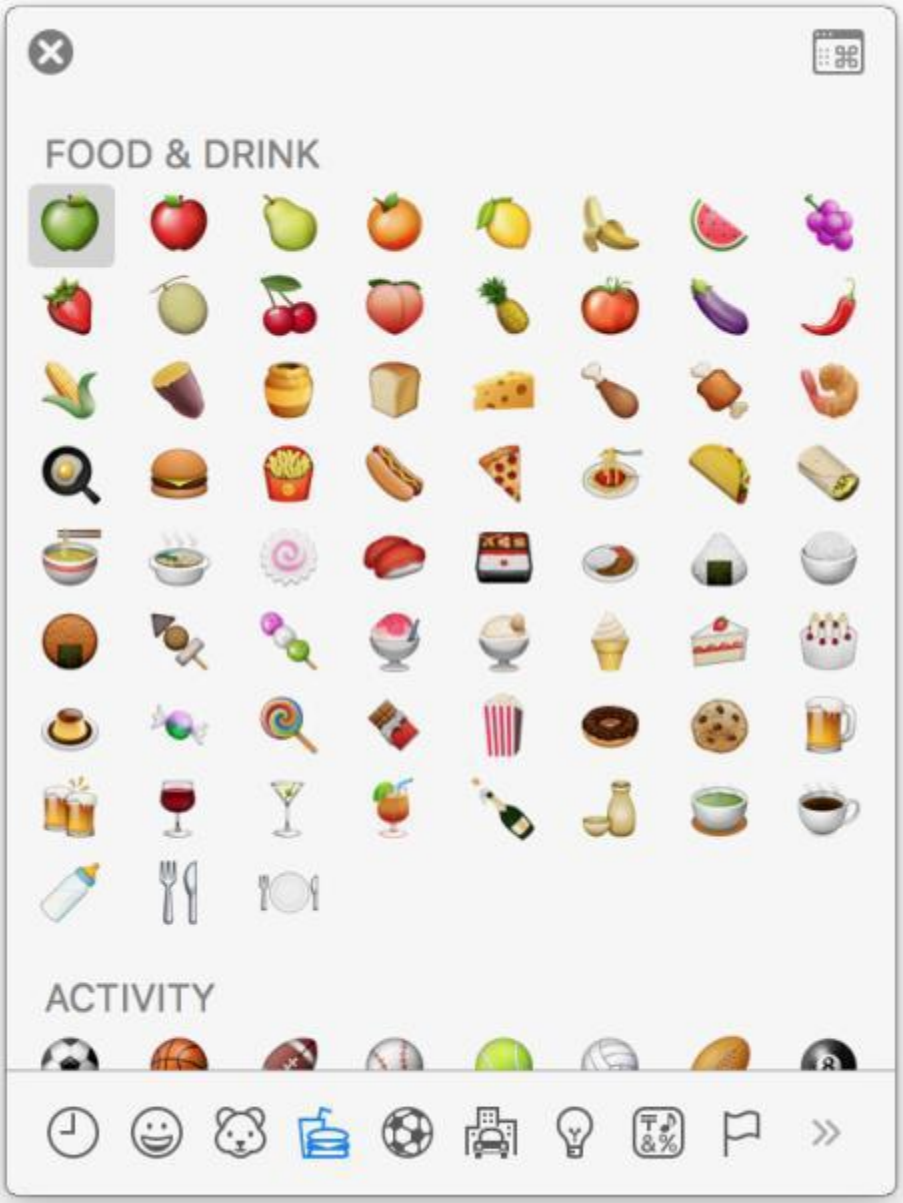
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EMOJI ICON



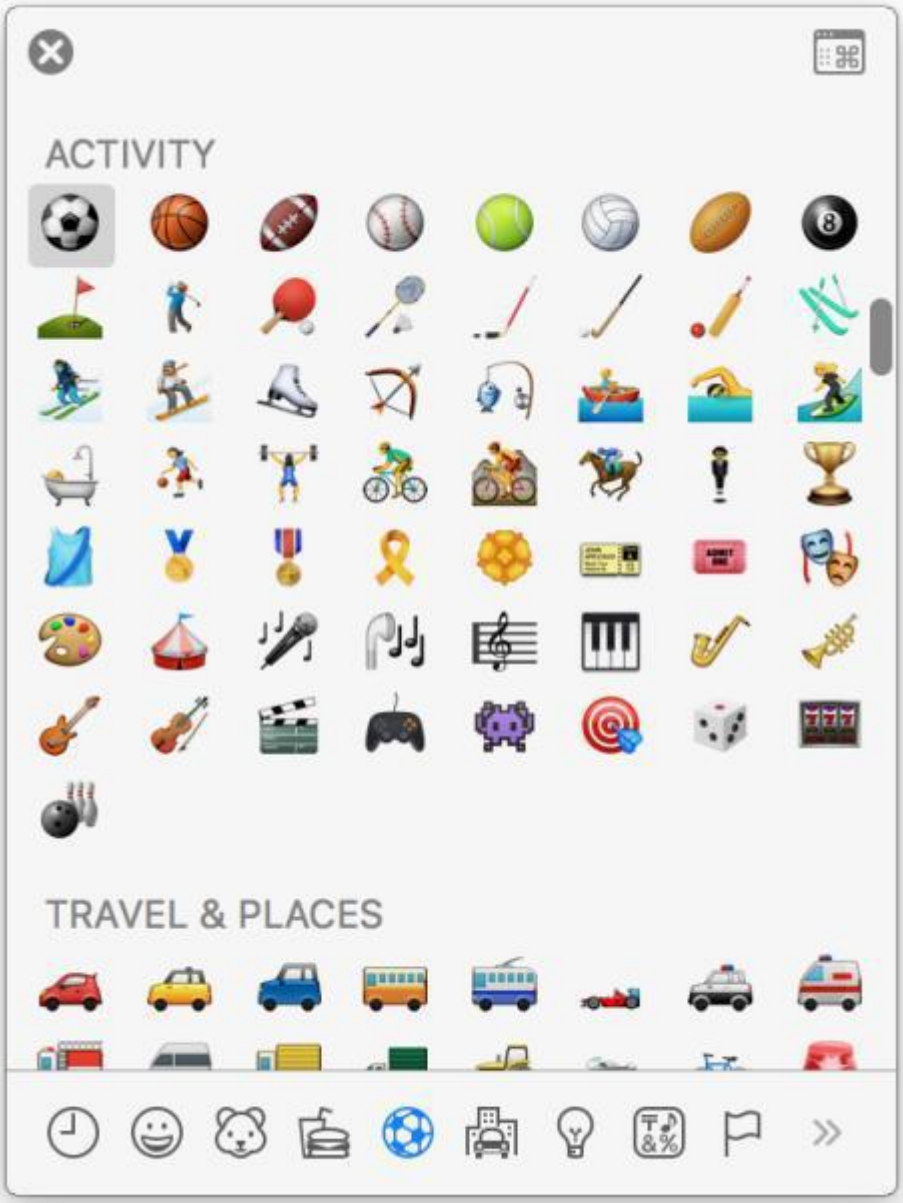
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EMOJI ICONS



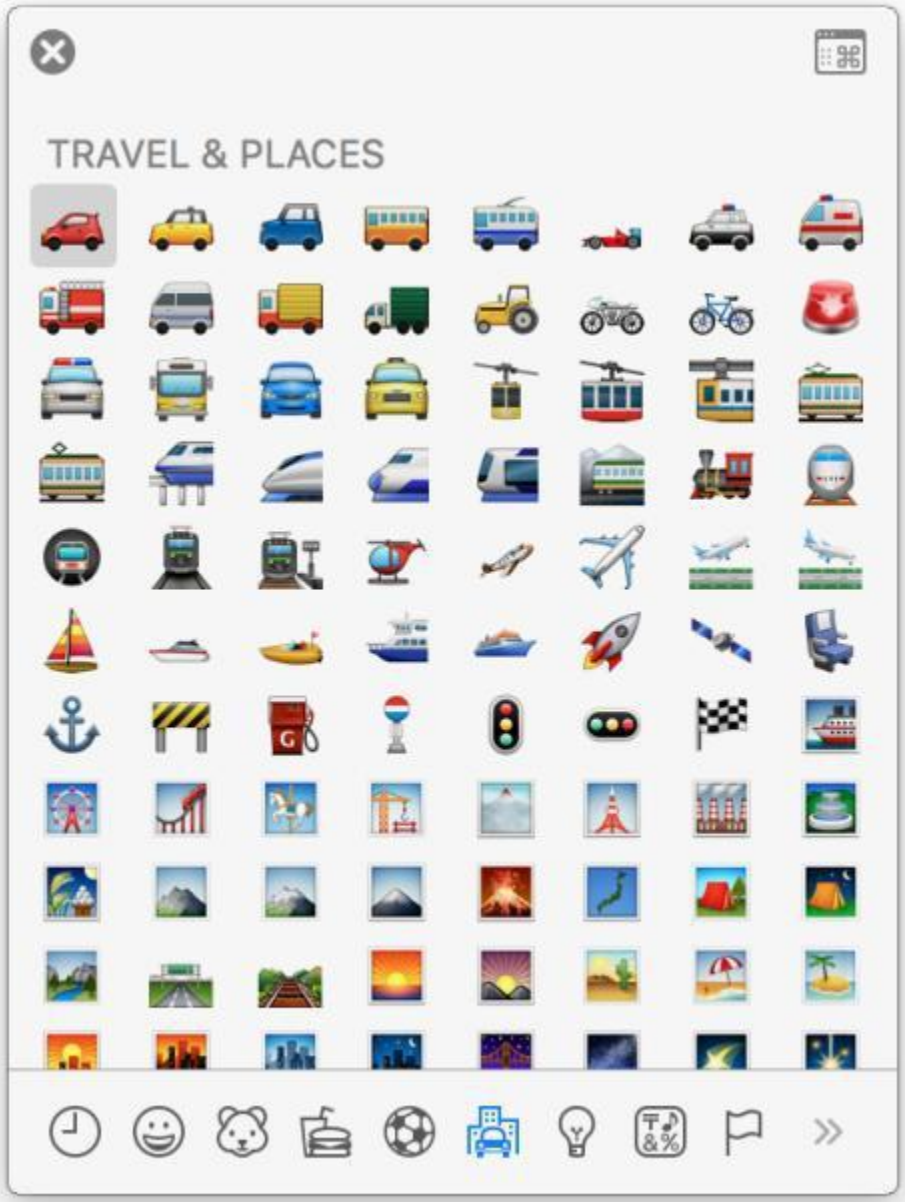
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EMOJI ICONS



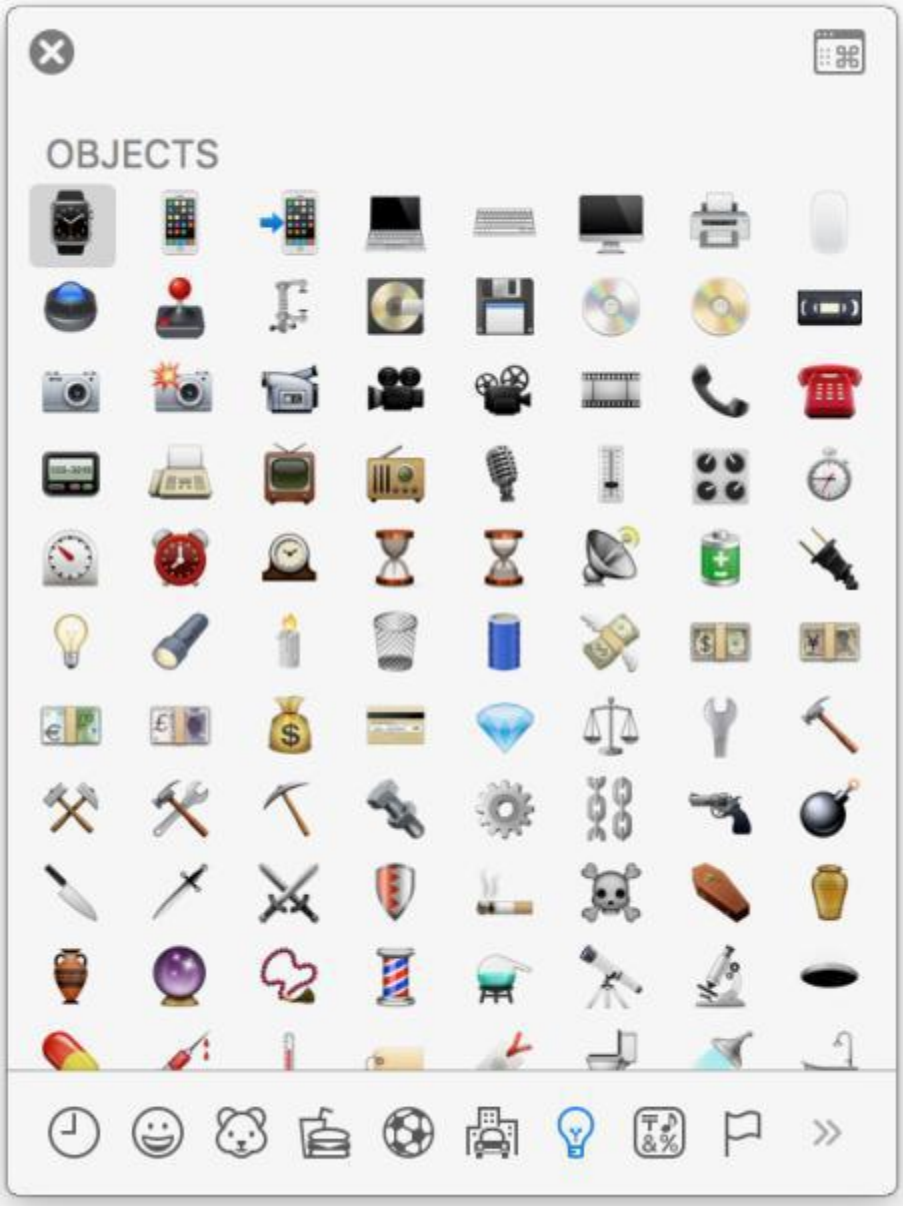
APPENDIX 5

EMOJI ICON



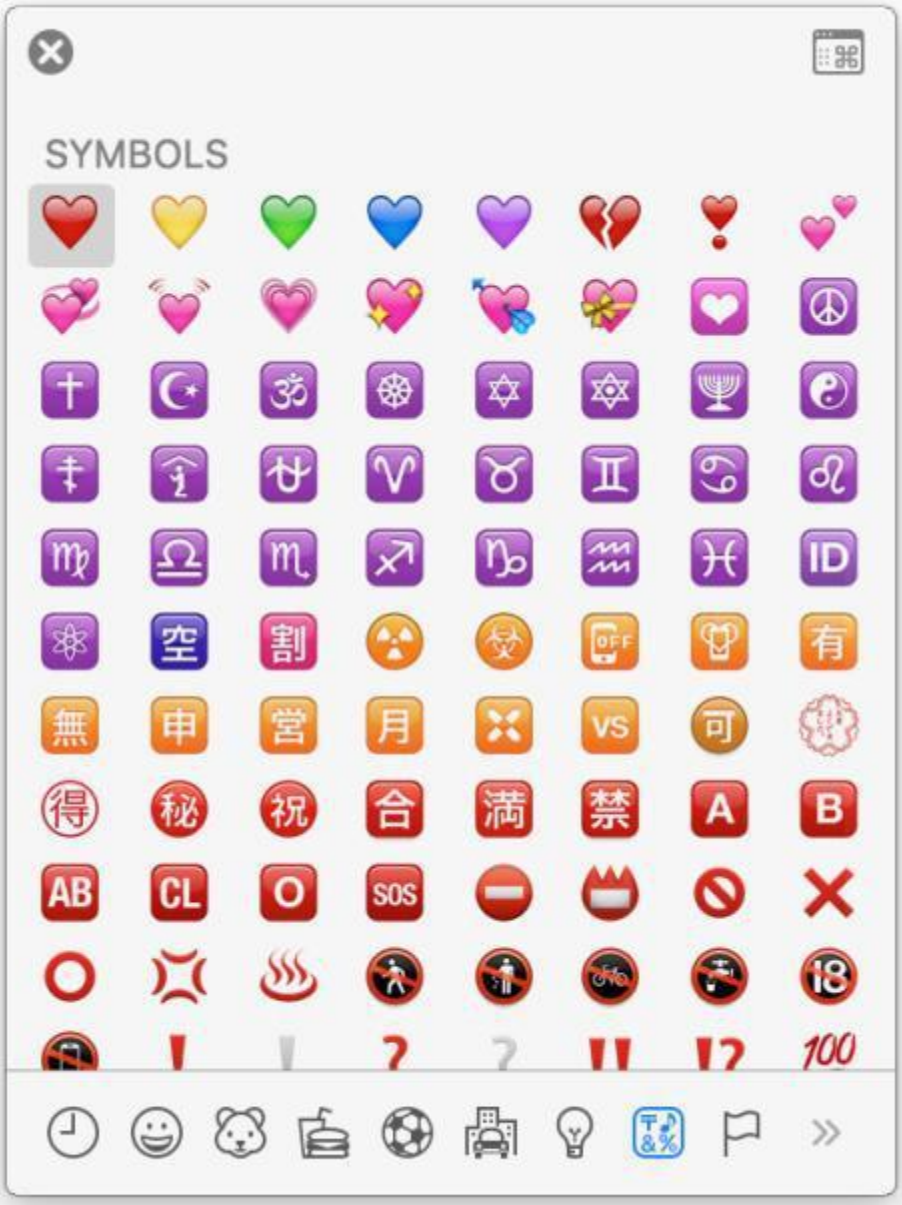
APPENDIX 6

EMOJI ICONS



APPENDIX 7

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APPENDIX 8

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