The Function Of Emoji In Digital Communication In Indonesia

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Abstract

This article aimed at elaborating the functions of emojis used in communication engaged in digital media, especially WhatsApp Group (WAG) and Instagram (IG). This topic was noteworthy due to the empirical facts showing that in communication digital in Indonesia emojis were used as expressions supporting communication nevertheless people often utilized them by breaking the communication logics. In undertaking the research, netnosemiotics, an approach integrating digital ethnography (netnography) and semiotics was applied. Through this study it was revealed that emojis did not only function as visual texts conveying particular messages, but also as the contexts representing the cultural relationship of various types of communication relations. Emojis were signs above signs. At this point, emojis built a communication we called metasemiotics. This finding significantly contributed to the development of digital communication model related to the digital culture as a whole, both at the local and global levels.

Keywords: emojis, metasemiotics, cultural narration, WhatsApp, Instagram

I. Introduction

Communication in digital media displays more complex patterns and characteristics than the conventional one. In digital media, when people want to initiate a communication act, they will tend to find technology that enables them to be engaged in the intended communication. At this stage, communication actors have encounter problems even before they start the communication. Wessels (2012) states that communicants' privacy will be hampered when they are connected by means of facilities available in the digital media technology. It is because technology cannot fully adopt the concept of privacy. This problem seems to shift the focuses

of communication and digital media studies from the already existing ones. Messages that have been the centers of researches now begin to be replaced by the technology that forms the message related to numerous types of social environment (Meyrowitz, 1999: 51 in Holmes, 2005: 1).

This matter actually demands concern from researchers and observers to further study the process of communication happens in digital media. If problems occur from the very beginning, it can be assumed that at the next phases when the communication takes place, the constructed communication model will be more complicated. Holmes (2005) who names digital media as the 'second media age', explains the features of communication using digital media by discriminating it from the communication model using conventional media, called the 'first media age', as exhibited in the table 1.

Table 1. *Transmission and Ritual Perspectives Compared*
Source: Holmes (2005: 35)

Transmission view	Ritual view
Concerned with content	Concerned with medium
News is information (Carey, 1989: 21)	News is drama and performance
Individuals interact with each other	Individuals interact with a medium
Logocentric – individuals restore presence	Simulacra – the act of communication does not refer beyond itself
Symbols are representations 'of' (Carey, 1989: 29)	Symbols are representations 'for'
The media 'mediate' reality	The media produce reality
Interaction Face-to-face is privileged	Integration｜Face-to-face is marginalized
Fleeting	Constant

Holmes calls communication practices in the digital world as ritual views (right column of the table). In his perspective, digital world has triggered ritual sites. In that situation, media in the second media age do not publish news and manage information as the ones in the first media age do. The second point of the table illustrates how he identifies this discrepancy. In the first media age that puts transmission view as the center of communication, news is information. In the second media age, news is a ritual and a performance.

Holmes' classification is interesting to be elaborated in respective with digital communication practiced by certain society that holds particular culture. In this regard, Author Removed (2017, 2019) undertook a study in the context of Indonesian culture. His study was begun by reviewing Ong's theory about orality in the history of human civilization before the invention of the internet (2014). Historically, Ong recognized two levels of orality, i.e. primary and secondary levels. The primary orality was an orality that occured in an absolute illiterate

community. If they were orally exposed to word 'tiger', they did not have a mental image of the series of the letters 't-i-g-e-r'. The speech would only generate an imagination of a physical appearance of a tiger they met in daily life. The secondary orality was the one practiced in a community whose members knew writing, yet still maintained their strong oral tradition. The oral tradition was motivated by the invention of radio and television. Based on Ong's opinion, programs offered by radio and television drove people to gather to listen to or to watch it. This habit opened a wider opportunity for them to be involved in conversations. Moreover, the programs basically were also oral-based. Even written sources like news were also delivered in oral forms by reading them (reading texts meant uttering them).

With Ong's theory as the ground, Author Removed concluded that communication interactions taking place in digital media exhibited similarities as well as dissimilarities as found in both primary and secondary orality. Then he named the communication acts 'tertiary orality' interaction. The ensuing table presents the summary of Author Remove research findings (table 2).

Table 2. Similarities and Differences of Communication Acts in Media in Relation with the Culture that Bases It. Source: The table was made by the writers by summarizing Author Remove Research Reports (2017, 2019).

Primary Orality	Secondary Orality	Tertoary Orality
Speakers have not known written symbols (writing system)	Speakers have known written symbols (writing system)	Speakers have known written symbols (writing system)
Communication is mediated by part of the body/biologically (mouth, ears and eyes)	Communication is mediated by radio and television technology. Speakers are listeners and viewers.	Communication is mediated by digital technology (a number of applications in computer network, internet)
Speakers are engaged in an active interaction involving physical activities.	Listeners and viewers passively interact mediated by technology (radio, television)	Speakers actively interact without involving physical activities (mind to mind interaction)
Free in the boundaries of real time and space.	Controlled by technology, cannot control communication and information.	Free in the boundaries of virtual time and space.
Like to gather and tell stories (narrative), listen to fairytales, become story tellers.	Like to gather (to listen to and to watch together), to utter written texts, talkshows, etc. (narrative).	Like to gather imaginatively in the virtual spaces.

Make groups (ethnicities), strong and paternalistic kinship relationships, have emotional bound with the place where they live in (homeland).	Make temporary groups mobilized by technology (radio and television), idols show up in media, anonymous, have no emotional bound with the place they live in (homeland).	Makes virtual communities, build a non-physical concept of friendship, have no geographical bound, surface conversation.

The table 2 shows that tertiary orality, the most recent phase of the history interval of the society's culture, is built by digital conversations that are almost limitless in terms of time and space. Unlike secondary orality whose participants are passive, participants of tertiary orality are active and mobile, even they tend to be 'wild'. Of some matters, the mobility may exceed the society's wildness practicing primary orality tradition namely the pre-historical humans who were categorized as the nomadic. It is true that in digital media, mobility is imaginative because it is a space where inter-minds interactions occur. However, it is this feature that enables this type of orality to have potency beyond physical boundaries. Digital media (integrated in the cyber space) is a place where people virtually gathering, discussing, being in transaction, and arguing. In many facets, these interactions even exceed the ones happening in the real world. The collapsed geographical boundaries and compressed time until the zero point create a seeming absolute freedom; conversations are constructed in a nearly perfect freedom. Netizens, an identity attached to new occupants of netocration (Bard and Söderqvist, 2002) that was coined from the word citizen (old occupants of socio-geographical space), communicate freely, create electronic democracy that at certain point also lead to an anarchic democracy.

All actions or interactions happen as if in reality. It is because digital media provide the users with accessible facilities to create the 'as if realities'. In conversation contexts, in order to construct conversation similar to the one happens in real oral or written communication, there is a digital language variant used to represent expressions like gestures in oral communication or punctuations in written communication. As people know, in digital communication there are emojis. Simply said, this digital language variant created by Shigetaka Kurikata in 1998 is a group of signs used to deliver expressions that are based on entities outside the verbal text. The entities may cover human beings, animals, trees, and other familiar, everyday objects. Emojis become important elements of digital language grammar. Formulation, standardization, and continuous updating carried out by the Unicode Consortium set emojis as a system of language (langue), namely digital language system.

The use of emojis generates a more complex yet interesting communication practice in the digital world. The fact is that emojis do not only put the digital communication as if happens in a real face-to-face interaction. They, in relation to the functions of communication, also overcome the limitations of expression found in verbal digital language. Those signs complete the verbal digital language so that communicants can create more effective converses. A message receiver does not have to say, "I am glad to hear your information", when the message sender tells him a good news. He can simply adds the 'like' emoji (a thumb up) at the end of

his sentence. It also means that emojis help the users to communicate faster (Danesi, 2017). Speed, as said by Vrilio (1986) is one of the significant characteristics of cyber culture.

In addition, nowadays emojis are used in a wider scope. They are no longer a conversation complements, but more main components of a dialogue. They develop to become the letters of the language, not only function as the punctuations of digital language or the suprasegmental elements in digital oral conversation. Seargeant (2019) recognizes it as the emoji revolution. He puts forward some thought-provoking cases that he uses as bases in his identification. The example is the transformation from verbal language into emojis done by some novelists. Some other writers also directly use emojis in writing short stories on twitter. Seargeant calls these fictions as emoji fictions. To him, this phenomenon is a proof of the development of emoji creativity to the domain of culture, in this case the popular culture. Furthermore, Seargeant claims that this fact is a result of consumerism. According to him, the pop culture develops in line with consumerism in which it is adapted as a communication tool. Using it as a starting point, facilitated by the digital technology, it is very possible that emojis will be a major communication tool in the future. Seargeant concludes:

> Emoji are a writing system which was birthed into a culture of hyper- capitalism and privatised regulation. And it's this element of their existence which perhaps foreshadows the most important way in which technology is going to define the communication of the future (Seargeant, 2019: 168).

Seargeant' study and prediction is of value to be discussed deeper. It seems that the phenomenon Seargeant examined and how he did it, was focused on verbal language logics. Put it differently, emojis as a visual entity transformed into a writing system, are still based on the way the system or the language operates. Its semantic aspect also refers to the global standard used until today. The problem of this thinking framework is that the forming of emojis is based on culture. As a visual supra-segmental element of language that are open of multiple interpretations- although it is standardized already- the use of emojis is contextual. It means that the function of emojis in conversations will depend on the cultural contexts where it is practiced. The culture, covering conducts, beliefs, and material culture, is the characteristic that sticks to its community holders so that what come after them almost always happen in acculturation processes.

The afore-mentioned problem was the focus of our research. We considered it was important to study the practice of using emojis among Indonesians related to Indonesian local culture. Many unpredictable things appeared in digital conversations that very often included emojis. The use of emojis even tended to be over that we called this condition as hyperemoji. People might use an emoji repeatedly at every end of a sentence. This might be indicated as the initial stage of a formation of new communication model as predicted by Seargeant. This study answered questions related to this phenomenon: how did cultural background influence digital communication?; how was the conceptual relation between emojis and their references built?; and what patterns of communication were constructed?.

We gathered data from WA and IG applications. In Indonesia, these two apps were in the five most popular list, along with You Tube and Face Book. However, this popularity was not the reason for choosing the two. WA app was picked because it was directly connected or synchronized with cellular phone number so that it offered a faster and better information

exchange or conversation both in face-to-face and interfaces communication. In other words, WA accounts holders responded faster than other apps users. How fast the response given was an opportunity of using emojis more frequently. Meanwhile, IG was selected for its visual characteristic. Commonly, IG users preferred to upload data (events, objects, etc.) in visual forms (and audiovisual) to verbal texts. IG data balanced verbal data collected from WA. These apps provided us with more complete data so that we could be more comprehensive in representing the use of emojis in digital communication.

II. Methods

This research operated in semiotic communication domain. It was conducted to examine messages (texts), not the other two elements of communication, the message sender and receiver. In this type of communication, the keyword was signification. Signification communication model emphasized the process of production and negotiation of meaning. Texts as the centers of communication were set within a cultural context and then being interpreted by the involved participants in the meaning production and negotiation. This situation necessitated nil communication failure. What might be resulted were different interpretations as the result of different cultural contexts. To conclude, signification communication was an interpretation-based communication. Fiske (1990:2) called this type of study as text and cultural study. He more specifically identified it as the semiotic school of communication.

In this research, emojis were posed in this view of communication. It was the consequence of emojis' function as nonverbal communication support. As discussed earlier, emojis functionei in the same way as supra-segmental elements did in oral communication. Emojis were visual signs. Set at this position, emojis at least had two levels of signification, the denotation and connotation (Barthes, 1985). Thus, a message of communication delivered by means of emojis could not be understood right away. Communicants had to interpret the meaning.

In this article we scrutinized emojis by employing semiotic method integrated with digital ethnography or netnography. Combining the methods was salient for emoji could be understood not only as visual texts but also how they operated in the traffic of message and content between message sender and receiver. Only by assigning the two variables, emojis could be comprehensively understood.

In the data analysis phase, Peirce's semiotics was applied (in Short, 2007). However, we did not use it in a strict way. When needed, we also referred to other theories combined with Peirce's as the major one. In Peirce's approach, first an emoji was posed as a concept or object (O), i.e. a visual sign representing a concept. The O was presented in three levels, icon (a sign represented similarity), index (a sign used to refer to a concept), and a symbol (a sign that was used based on convention). Next, the emoji was learned as a form visualized the process of interpretation proceeded in the communicants' minds. At this stage, it was placed in Interpretant (I) domain that also consisted of three levels of signification, namely rheme (spontaneous interpretation), dicent (specific interpretation, and argument (an interpretation accompanied by strong justifications).

One more aspect of Peirce's semiotics triangle was Representamen (R). The descendants were qualisign (something that was a potential of a sign), sinsign (something that

could be declared as a sign, but had not defined yet), and legisign (something that were legitimated as a sign). In our research, this aspect was not fully used because emojis were final signs in digital communication. Viewed from R, emojis were fixed signs. Hence, for this aspect it was only legisign position that could be referred to.

Because the analysis took semiotics as the foundation theory, emojis were placed as texts that should be interpreted. As Pierce stated, semiotics was a text and cultural study. One of the weaknesses of this approach was that it tended to lead the researchers to be trapped in their subjective opinions. It was caused by the interpreters' limited knowledge as the supporting referential aspect. To minimalize it, we combined semiotics and netnography. Netnography is a development of ethnography that is used especially to study socio-cultural activities of a society member in the digital world (Kozinets, 2010: 41). The other terms used with equivalent meaning are cyber ethnography and virtual ethnography (Costello, et.al.: 2017). Pink, et.al. (2016) call it digital ethnography. The word netnography has been used since the end of 1990. At the beginning, it was frequently applied to research online marketing. Inter alia were the ones conducted by Kozinets (2002), Sandlin (2006), and Rocca, et.al. (2014). In other disciplines, Love (2011) employed it in a religion study and Kulavuz-Onal and Vasquez (2014) in English education. Netnography becomes more and more important since digital media also becomes more varied and complex. It continuously metamorphoses and produces multiple new forms. It is inseparable from life in which spectacular moments also happens in it (Alinejad, 2018). We ourselves employed it to identify communication patterns occured in the digital world (Author Remove, 2017, 2019).

As an advancement of ethnography, principally the procedure practiced in netnography is similar to it in ethnography. A significant difference is the reality of the place where the observed society's activities happen. Ethnography is used to learn physical reality while netnography is employed to research virtual reality (netocracy/neto-un-geographical). For instance, Kozinet (2010: 61) identifies the procedures used in netography in five steps as follows (table 3)

Table 3. Netnography Reasearch Procedures
Source: Kozinets (2010:61)

Step	Description
1	Definition of Research Qoestions, Social Sites or Topics to Investigate
2	Community Identication and Selection
3	Community Participant-Observation (engagement, immersion) and Data Collection (Ensure Ethical Procedures)
4	Data Analysis and Iteratif Interpretation of Findings
5	Write, Present, and Report Research Finding and/or Theoretical and/or Policy Implications

The next difference is that ethnography requires researchers to directly participate in the society interactions studied while netnography does not always demand it. Netnography can be conducted in a participatory way or oppositely in a passive way. In passive netnography, the researchers can collect data by only observing the interaction between the communicants. We preferred to do this sort. We observed how they used emojis when they were engaged in communication. The process of observing was the process of collecting data.

At the next stage, we used netnography to confirm the validity of the result of the semiotic interpretation done. Therefore, the two methods were applied in a back and forth way and completed one another in order to have comprehensive, valid findings. This methodological working situation set the approaches to be at the same level of position. On this ground we united them in one terminology 'netnosemiotics'. The placing of the word netno at the initial position was not to show that this method was more important than the semiotics. It was more to get a more comfortable pronunciation. We contended that to be understood and applied well, emojis as semiotic texts had to be scrutinized within the users' cultural context. Semiotic study undertaken to research the practice of emoji usage in digital media had to be integrated with netnography. Next is a chart (figure 1) illustrating the procedures of netnosemiotics.
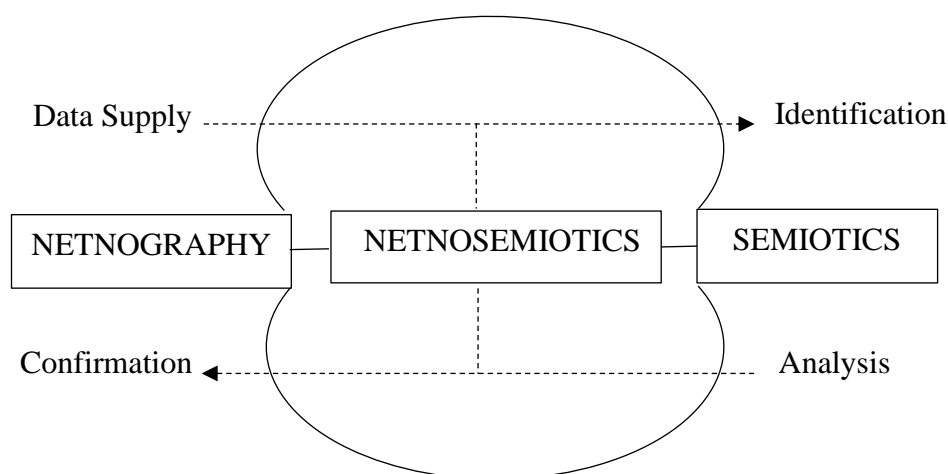
Figure 1. Netnosemiotic Methodological Chart
 Chart is made by reseachers

III. Result

III.1 Emojis as Digital Conversation Accessories
Danesi (2017) identifies the function of emojis using semiotic perspective combined with other views, such as Roman Jackobson's communication fucntion theory. He states that in digital communication, emojis tend to be used in light or casual conversations. It means that they function in a phatic way. Within this context, emojis are used to open or close a conversation, and to prevent silence. In opening a conversation, for instance a Slightly Smiling Face emoji

is adopted to stunt a greeting word "Hi!" in order to build a positive and cheerful atmosphere of the dialogue. The same emoji might be included in the end of a conversation to avoid a sense of rejection and create a feeling of closeness. On the contrary, still the same emoji is sent to fill a conversation pause when the sender wants to get certain information yet the receiver seems to reject to provide it.

Danesi's conclusion shows that the function of emoji is parralel to the function of gestures in primary oral talk. When two people of Western culture meet, it is common for them to say 'Hi!' while making special gesture. In the eastern culture like Indonesia, people will not make such a gesture but rather they shake hands. In informal meetings, shaking hands is done if they have known each other before the meeting. Sometimes, there are participants who have not known each other before, but usually they are in the middle of the other already known people. They shake hands too when they say goodbye.

The interesting is that Indonesians almost never include Handshake emoji in their text to begin or end conversations. To open talk, they send verbal greeting like "Assalamu'alaikum" (greeting word originally used by Moslems but recently tends to be used by people of other religions too as a national greeting) or other greetings in Indonesian such as "Selamat Pagi and Selamat Siang, (Good morning, Good Afternoon), etc. They do not use it to close dialogue either. To do it, they often use Smiling Face or Person with Folded Hands. In Indonesian culture, this gesture is used to deliver greetings from distance. In certain local cultures, such as Sundanese, Javanese, and Minangkabau, this greeting is also accompanied with onother gesture, i.e. bowing the body a little. There is no gratitude utterance marked by this gestural sign.

Another interesting feature is that the emoji users in digital communication in Indonesia often use more than one emojis to show one expression. In many occasions, they string several emojis together, same emoji typed repeatedly or using some variants of the same kind, for example some different Smiling Faces) or different kinds of emoji combined for instance the Thumbs Up Sign/ Like typed together with Flexed Biceps, Flowers, and so on. Semiotically, this repeated use of emoji may generate two possibilities. First, the message senders want to emphasize their message. It is equivalent to repetition of words, phrases, or clauses to highlight meaning. Second, the senders conduct speech acts overly. This is a redundancy, excessive language use that results in grammar errors. In academic writings, this puts a sense of non-academic feature to the writings (Sulistyaningtyas, 2018). Pay attention to the one type of emoji used consecutively on figure 2!

Figure 2. Data of Consecutive Use of Similar Emojis.

Source: Researchers' Documentation

Meanwhile, the use of a series of different emojis in one expression visually illustrates the situation of a more decorative talk. In Peirce's semiotics, this written speech can be treated as indexical signs referring to the acts of expressing several things at once based on the conversation topics. The complexity level of the talks, for example those that lead to an opposite or conflicting stands makes the participants to use emojis with various nuances and can even contradictory ones to complete the verbal expressions extended. Of course other emojis may function to mutually support the statements. For example, to talk to friends with achievements we usually praise them, congratulate them, and support them to obtain more accomplishments. In this case, different emojis are used in a series to express narrative statements. As words in a sentence, those emojis become units of visual signs stringing certain messages and contents. Look at the figure 3.
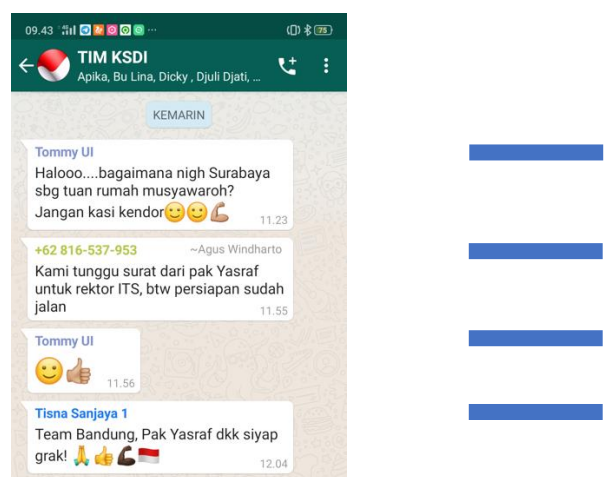
Figure 3. Data of Consecutive Use of Different Emojis
Source: Researchers' Documentation

The data showed a conversation about a plan of an even would be held in Surabaya. The first message sender asked the host's preparation. The second was the host informing that they were still waiting for a letter from another involved party. Then the first sender responded by giving a Smiling Face and a Thumb Up emojis. Next, the third participant appeared by saying that the Bandung team was ready to join the event. A Folded Hands, a Thumbs Up, a Flexed Biceps, and an Indonesian flag completed this utterance. The use of these different emojis in a row is interesting to be elaborated. By means of such series of emojis, it seems that the emoji user wanted to convey more comprehensive message about the coming event and their preparation to conduct it at once. The next table (table 4) illustrates our semiotic interpretation of the emojis as units of visual signs.

Table 4. Mapping of Different Emojis Used in A Row as Units of Narrrative Visual Signs
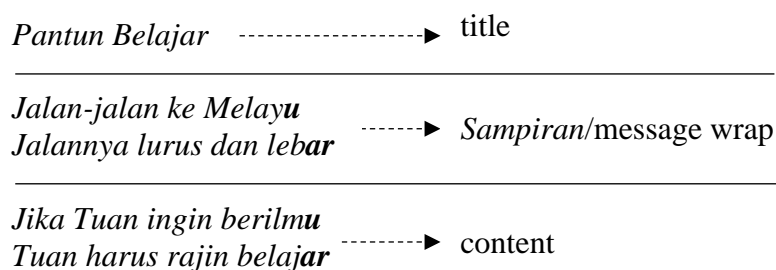Table was made by the Researchers

Emoji	Unit of Visual Sign	Semiosis Narrative Message Pesan Naratif Semiosis
🙏	Icon of praying gesture	Hoping and praying for the success of the event
👍	Symbol of appraisal and admiration	Respecting the host for organizing the event
💪🏿	Icon of strength, spirit	Have to be spirited in conducting the event.
🇮🇩	Symbol of nationalism	The event is important for the country

From the interpretation, it is clear the emojis were structured as a semiosis of narrative message. The message can be replaced by these sentences: "We hope and pray that the event will run successfully. We extend our appraisal and salute to the organizing committee for your work hard preparing it. We have to conduct the event with full enthusiasm for it is important for our country." The content of these sentences built emotional atmosphere that could persuade participants to join the event. This emotional situation accompanied the sent verbal sentences about the organizer's readiness to go to Surabaya.

The question is how was this semiosis interpretation relevant to the reality happened? Our netnographic data showed that 30 % of the users included the emojis in the talk consciously. It meant that the signs were understood logically in line with the semiosis messages. In the users' mind, emojis were the dicent signs, or even the argument ones. However, the other 60% did not realize that emojis they used were signs carrying particular contents or concepts. They put them in their sentences just because they liked them. Mostly they used it spontaneously (rheme). 10% of the users did not imply any tendency in using emojis. They used them very occasionally. What interesting is that when via WAG we asked them whether or not they learnt or read emoji dictionary, almost 90 % of the respondents said never. The question on whether or not in real world (cultural reality) they knew the meanings of the gestural signs used was confirmed positively by saying they did (98%).

Based on those facts, it can be claimed that the emojis used by people in Indonesia did not always function based on semiosis logic- that actually was parallel to the denotative meaning written in the emoji dictionary. They used emojis to merely embellish their sentences so that the conversation became more interesting. It is also proven that unlike Danesi's claim, emojis were not only included in light conversations. As accessories, the users situated emojis outside the talk. Emojis functioned similarly to ornaments in traditional architecture. According to Barthes (1990), this fact could be classified as cultural code. Indonesian people as confirmed earlier practice a strong oral culture. One characteristic of such society among others is that they celebrate 'crowdedness'. It is represented not only in digital conversations but also in the conventional written expressions. For instance, academic writings produced by

university students contained redundancies in term of overuses of words, ambiguity, local language influences, and were illogical (Sulistyaningtyas, 2018). In literature, traditional literary works were also ornamental, for example pantun (traditional verse consisting of abab-rhymed four lines with two sampiran (figurative suggestions) lines and two isi (content) lines. This genre is characterized by layered features. The writer writes two initial sampiran (lines used as a bridge to introduce the message) and then followed by the content lines. The writing pattern is illustrated in the following chart (figure 4).

Pantun Belajar   - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - ▶ title

Jalan-jalan ke Melayu
Jalannya lurus dan lebar   - - - - - ▶ *Sampiran*/message wrap

Jika Tuan ingin berilmu
Tuan harus rajin belajar   - - - - - ▶ content

Figure 4. Pantun Writing Model
Chart and pantun were created by researchers

In a wider scope, the celebration of crowdedness is not only reflected in the language (primary oral language, written language, tertiary oral language), but also in other domains. Architectures of traditional buildings are always decorative. Ornaments can be found in every corner. Traditional music like gamelan and hadroh, a religious music of Javanese, are also crowded communal musics. Indonesian modern visual arts can be identified as narrative artworks that one of the characteristics is also crowdedness, i.e. always included many objects in a single work (Supangkat, 1996). Even in religious life, the very dominant traditional Islam community assembled in an organization called Nahdatul Ulama/NU practices a decorative way of worship too. They often gather to conduct tahlil, a gathering intended to pray for the deaths. The after-prayer prays are done together and voiced loudly.

These cultural facts may be referred to as a foundation in analyzing the way Indonesians use emojis in digital communication. It cannot be said that they base their digital communication acts on those cultural facts consciously. Instead, they put emojis in their sentences in a carefree way. It means that to them the cultural facts do not constitute their knowledge but more are considered as realities as its characteristic foundation. In such a situation, Jung (1990) states that in relation to culture, people's behavior is a collective unconscious action. In this case, emojis become archetype, namely visual objects that facilitate this unconsciousness. Emojis turn into a kind of 'creature' coming from the history or the users' past life. Thereby they easily recognize and become familiar to those visual signs. Emojis are funny ghosts (Author Removed, 2019). They tempt people and they are naughty. They appear from the body of the users' history. In biology, emojis mark atavism, i.e. old characteristic that reappear in new organism after a long absence.

IV. Discussion

In semiotics, a sign is defined as something representing something else (Zeost, 1992). This representing feature, especially in Peirce's semiotics, is based on the logic. For this ground, the standard is to which extent the relation between the sign and the represented object makes sense. Because of this logical relation, signs can be used in the pragmatic level or in the users' daily life. However in digital conversations, this theoretical fact is not fully relevant. When emojis are used ornamentally in sentences as the data formerly presented, the relational logic between the sign and its referent has been neglected. At least, the one used in the conversation is not 'cognitive logic' but 'cultural logic' or situational logic (context). Observe how Endang Caturwati, an art professor, described a situation in her IG account (figure 5).

Figure 5. Data of Speech Act in Instagram
Source: Researcher's Documentation

As found in the text, Caturwati wrote about the alienated art teachers in Kuningan Regency, West Java. In that region, there were only six art and culture teachers with relevant educational background. Other teachers came from various backgrounds such as mathematics, language, physical education, etc. The unique fact was that she used Grinning Face and Musical Notation emojis. It is for sure contradictory. She responded to the sad condition by 'smiling' and 'singing'. The context of the utterance was a workshop. The shared picture was a snapshot of a video. Caturwati informed a part of a longer activity. Because the main content of the information was something pathetic, the use of Grinning Face emoji became contradictory.

Logically, a happening that is a part of a bigger event cannot replace the event itself. Another similar case is shown in the following short WAG conversation (figure 6).
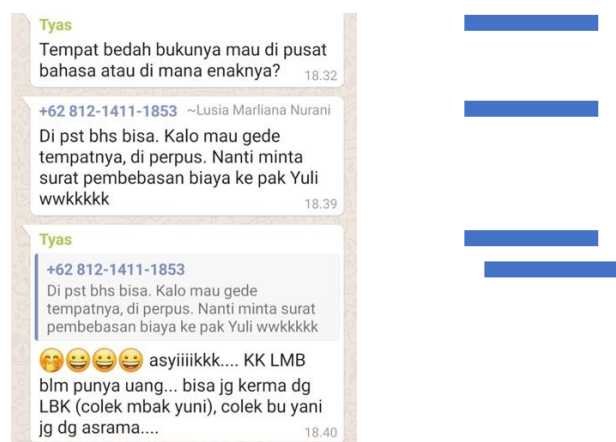
Figure 6. Contradictory Logic of Emoji Use in WAG Conversation
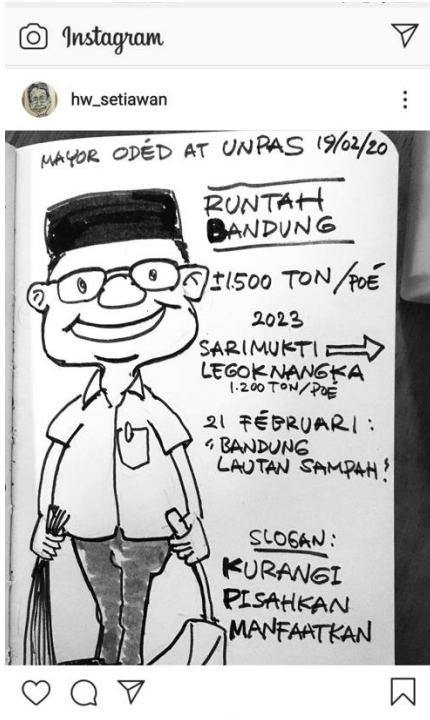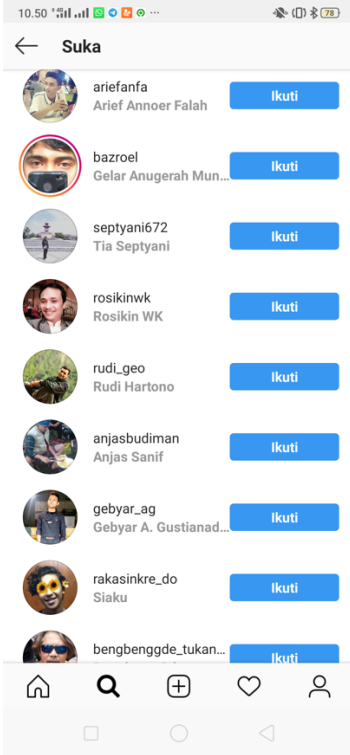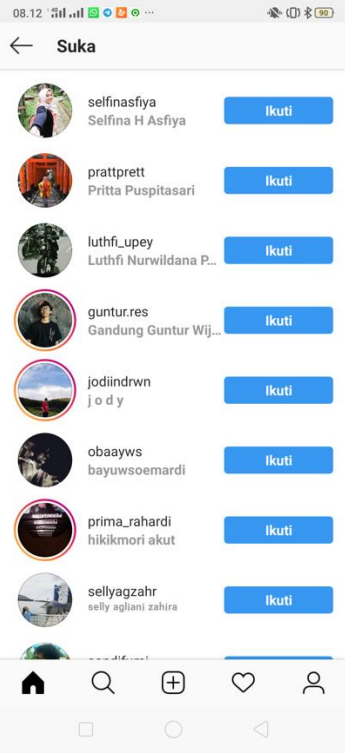Source: Researchers' Personal Documentation

It is a conversation about a plan of a program conducted by a lecturer work unit (major-based group) called KK Literasi, Media, dan Budaya or Literacy, Media and Culture Group at a certain university. They faced a financial problem. As can be seen from the data, one of the group members stated that the unit had no money to conduct the program. Surprisingly, the participant used Smiling Face with Smiling Eyes and Hand Covering Mouth emoji combined with the Grinning Face consecutively. The use of these emoji did not support the context reality. The first emoji was also contradictory with the following three emojis. The Smiling Face with Smiling Eyes and Hand Covering Mouth emoji are expressions of concern while the Grinning Face denotes happiness. The presence of the Grinning Face might be an effort of the user to netralize the atmosphere of the conversation in order to persuade the group members to stay happy although they face major problem. Therefore, there was a deviation in the semiotic logic of the used emojis. Here, the iconicity message of the used emojis no longer referred to the domination of happiness like smiling face (via three Grinning Face emojis), but rather an invitation to create a cheerful air eventhough they had to deal with an opposite reality.

The two data (figure 5 and 6) represent two different communicants in two distinct situations. Figure 5 illustrates a message sender while picture 6 depicts a message responder. The two parties who held different positions used emojis based on the same ground. They put emojis into functions (and included the physical form as visual signs) in conversations but they ignored the relational logic of its semiosis. They consciously or unconsciously created new signs that could only be understood personally by each of them. The messages sent via those emojis were unlike the standardized meanings found in the dictionary.

Next, focus on the communicants functioned as the message receivers who responded the delivered information or news! We present these data in the subsequent table 5.

Table 5. Emojis of Public's Responses toward Instagram News/Information
Source: Reasearchers' Documentation
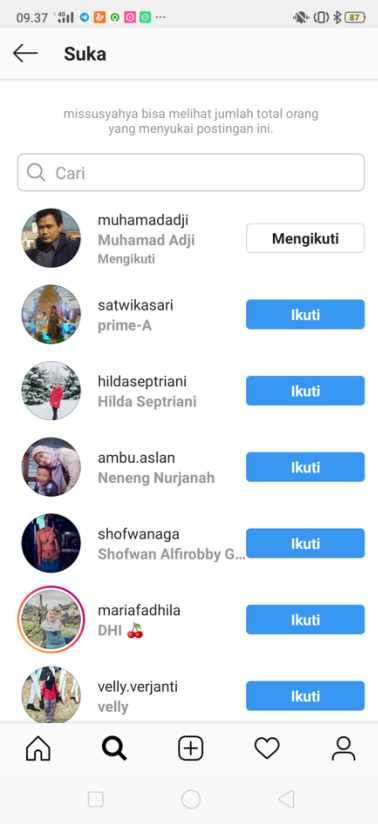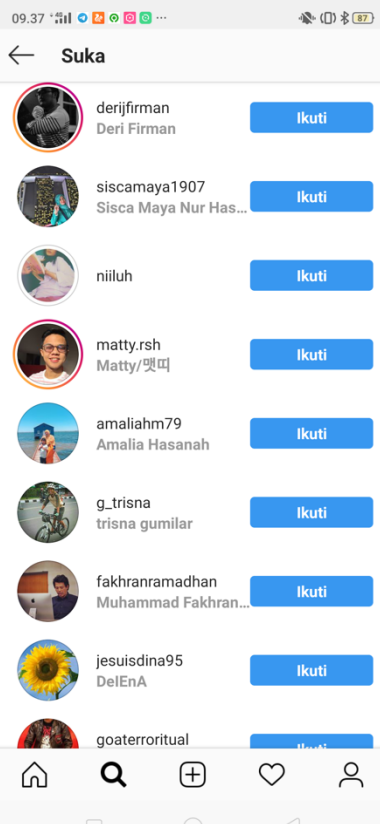
INFORMATION/NEWS	PUBLIC/RECEIVERS

The preceding data were taken from Hawe Setiawan's IG account, a writer and caricaturist lived in Bandung, West Java Province. The left coloumn (the information/news) was Setiawan's caricature while the right coloumn displayed some responders (only taken some) of the caricature. The caricature was the artist's critical opinions about Bandung, the city he lived in, that was full with trash. The artwork was full with verbal texts. It tended to be an informative caricature. Setiawan was a journalist and with this caricature he seemed to write news about Bandung that became an ocean of garbage. Thus the content of the conveyed news was negative, something unpleasant.

However as shown in the table, the public (Setiawan's followers) sent heart emojis to show their likes. This explanation is equivalent to the explanation given before by a lecturer. The difference is in the first case a sad situation was responded with cheerful emoji. Public responded something unpleasant with pleasant expression. How can this case be comprehended by means of relational logic between signs and realities or concepts they refer to? A Heart emoji could be meant to respond the caricature, not the message it contained, both conveyed implicitly through pictures and explicitly via verbal texts. Yet, this kind of response still disturbs the relational logic between the signs and its' referents. However, this heart visual sign semiotically has become a myth connected to love and affection. Meanwhile, garbage problem in Bandung has existed for years and been known by not only Bandung citizens but also

Indonesian people. There certainly is a contradiction between the semiotic expression of heart emoji used and the reality. At least, the meaning of the semiotic sign becomes ambiguous.

Next we display facts of more extremely contradictive responses in the following table 6. In the left coloumn, there is an obituary saying that the ninth rector of Padjadjaran University Bandung passed away. The news was uploaded by the IG account holder, Aquarini Prabasmoro, a professor of literature at that university. As can be checked from the caption below the obituary, the uploaded information was liked by some of Prabasworo's followers. Some of those were displayed in the right coloumn. This fact is surprising. For society members that based their lives on rationality, the fact is hard to be accepted. Isn't it odd to find public respond to an obituary by giving happy expressions? It may be happen if the person dies is a big criminal. Dr. Himendra was a prominent figure. He was one of the respected Padjadjaran University former rectors.

Table 6. Use of Extremely Contradictory Emojis in Instagram Communications
Table was made by the Researchers. Source of Photo: Researchers' Documentation.

However, the fact said something contradictory. This fact and all other casuistic facts discussed previously become a complicated semiotic problem yet interesting to be studied. As explained earlier, in semiotic perspective, the relation between a signifier and a signified is formed based on logic. Referring to this theory, the cases discussed before are 'semiotic

anomalies'. Smiling Face, Thumbs Up, Laughing Face, etc. have agreed upon meanings, even at the global level. Based on Saussure's (1990) opinion, emojis have become a langue (a system of language gramar). Simply put, emojis have moved beyond its symbolic positions. They carry defined meanings. For instance, the Thumbs Up emoji and Heart emoji that means admire and love are no longer metaphors bringing a nuance of emotive meanings but have entered the cognitive domain. The relation built between the emojis and the referents is a logical relation.

Therefore, if those emojis are used for opposite meanings, it can be said that there is a twisting of semiotic logic. The logical relation of semiotic has been broken. Derrida (in Culler, 1993) -who deconstructs Saussure's structural linguistic theory- explaines that the meaning of a word is never static. He insists that the meaning of a certain word is not drawn from the relation of its different sound with other words as Saussure's claim. He called Saussure's opinion as a 'difference'. According to Derrida, the meaning of a word is postponed (differance). It will, he says, always be defined by the word's positional context in a text and context. Put differently, the meaning of a text is always its context. With Derrida's theory analogy, we argue that the twist on the relational logic of emojis happened in the three cases exceed Derrida's deconstruction problematics. However, Derrida's deconstruction over Saussure's theory is on the sign relation level (word/language) in a text. Derrida plays with texts of which the meaning constructions have been defined by Saussure. Derrida recognizes that texts always deconstruct one another. Meanwhile in the semiotic logic twist happens to the use of emojis discussed here, the users did not only deconstruct the meaning construction in the textual relation but also the meanings of the defined signs (legisign) that actually has been done by the society members at the pragmatic level. We mean to say that they have understood and used those meaning outside the digital world.

People using emojis in Indonesia maybe do not realize it. As discussed previously, digital communication act practiced by Indonesians is highly influenced by the oral tradition, the root of Indonesian culture. From the opposite perspective, it can be said that the digital technology through the use of emojis has revitalized this oral tradition. The characteristics of the new oral tradition surpass the original features of the old version. Emojis do not only resurrect the old one, but also create new ones. Emojis as a product of digital technology become a kind of special tool that mediates them. In this instance, we can arrange a sillogysm that if the digital communication actors have broken the relational logic between the sign and its concept, it means that emojis have motivated the users to do so. Emojis have changed, or at least moved, the position of concepts and the semiosis practices. Emojis have created what we want to call metasemiotics.

Metasemiotics is another semiotics, something different from the conventional meaning used in conventional practices of communication (first media age). Metasemiotics is the semiotics of digital communication. To give meaning to the word that we coined, we first referred to a dictionary to check its literal meaning. Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2010: 931) recorded two meanings for this prefix: (1) connected with a change of position or state: metamorphosis, metabolism; (2) higher, beyond: metaphysic, metalanguage. We tended to use the second meaning. Therefore, what we mean by metasemiotics in this article is something behind semiotics. If this definition is linked to Zoest's (1992) definition of sign, it can be inferred that something behind semiotics is something hidden behind the interpretation of a

sign. A sign, as defined by Zoest, is something representing something else. Thus, metasemiotics is a sign behind another sign. A sign with agreed-upon meaning that is used for another communication function and purpose will create a new sign. It is a sign above the previous sign. This phenomenon appears in today digital communication practices.

Reffering to Fiske (1990) who devides communication into two schools: praxis for verbal communication and signification (semiotics) for interpretative communication, the practice of using emojis in digital communication has brought about the third school; a school that integrates the two former schools. In line with the communication pattern that we formulated before, we call it metasemiotics. In this new school, communication practices are viewed as the combination of the praxis and the semiosis. In other words, semiotic texts, in this case the visual sign 'emojis', are practiced in the praxis domain of communication. In addition, unlike the praxis where the message transmission is posed as a center and in the semiotics in which texts become the center, in metasemiotics, the two centers are united. In this model of communication, the communicants might not understand the verbal texts. He understands the message from the included emojis (semiotic visual signs) instead. In such a case, emojis function as the context of the verbal texts. On the contrary, people do not have to work hard in interpreting the used emojis. Instead of doing it, they can comprehend the intended meaning from the verbal texts. In this case, the verbal texts may be the contexts of the visual texts. The verbal texts co-occur with the visual ones. In conclusion, in matesemiotics school the study of texts in cultural context is the study of the verbal texts and the visual text at once.

v. Conclusion

The analysis brings about five important results. First, the practices of using emojis in digital communication were not only in order to create a more relaxed conversation. Those visual signs did not simply represent the phatic function of communication for example to put a cheerful atmosphere in the talk. Beyond this function, the use of emojis was more inward to the message sender. Consciously or unconsciously, a choice to use of a certain emoji was a representation of the user's understanding. For Indonesian speakers, those who had knowledge on language style, or at least a basic knowledge of rethorics, consciously used some emojis consecutively in one expression to emphasize the meaning conveyed. There, emojis were also used as a persuasive medium (to influence, to persuade, to convince, etc.).

Second, semiotically, the use of emojis was rooted in the users' culture. It was a common sense. However, how the concrete manifestation of this cultural element could be represented in the practices of using emojis was something interesting and specific. It meant that the practices became a specific problem of the culture in which the emoji users practiced it. In Indonesia, the most influencing factor was the oral tradition that had long become the root of the society's culture. Emojis could be viewed as a personal expression in collective community that enjoyed being in crowdedness. The used emojis had no relation at all with the content of the talk. Consecutive use in one expression was just to embellish the dialogue with ornamental decoration. However, those emojis would as if occupy the smartphone screen.

Third, at a certain level, emojis were not only used in a way that was not related to the content of conversations but also broke the semiotic logics that supposed to be hold by those emojis. It happened because the users shifted their functions from the semiotic to the praxis

function of communication. The users realized that at the real system level, the gestural signs encoded become emoji signs in digital world had cultural reference known by all society members. However, at the pragmatic level of emoji use, the users included them in the communication process for various purposes. This phenomenon led to the appearance of metasemiotics, i.e. sign above another sign, a meaning above another meaning. At this very level, the communication practice became the practice of playing or presenting the signs.

Fourth, placed side by side with the conventional communication pattern formulized by Fiske in two schools: the praxis and the semiotics, the metasemiotics of emojis could be claimed as a new school in communication field. This brandnew school identified the pattern of communication in digital media as an independent separate pattern that was dynamic even subversive (broke the conceptual relation between a sign and its referent). In this school, communication did not have the same concentration center as the two former conventional communications. The message transmission functioned as the focus of praxis communication and texts as the epicentrum of semiotics had been considered to have equal positions that were complementary one another. Thus, the communication practices in digital media could be viewed as the practices of both praxis and semiotic communications.

Fifth, because emojis were visual text units that so far were considered operating less important (marginal) functions than the verbal text units (letters, words), the metasemiosis discussed earlier opened an opportunity for the emoji visual text to become independent as a medium to deliver a message. In other words, like the verbal languages, emoji visual texts could function as communication media. With this ground, Seargeant's prediction about 'emojian communication pattern' as the communication revolution triggered by digital technology met a rational foundation. In the future, will people communicate by means of pictograph letters or paintings found in caves' walls like the humans of pre-historical age did? We do believe that new form will be created. It is a challenge for reseachers to study further. It is important to be understood that bo matter how free the communication in digital media is, still it is imprisoned in the digital technology that is actually limited and narrow. However, the cyber space developing the digital culture is just a small variable in the whole universe of humans' life.

Acknowledgement

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