

## Conference Paper

# The Language of Emoji in Social Media

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**Abstract**

The very fast development of information technology which is characterized by an influx of industry 4.0 has changed the way of human and behavior in language. The grammar which is a phenomenon of interest to language is examined along with behavior change language in the internet world. A phenomenon in language online is the emergence of the use of visual language emoji in conducting conversations in social media. This paper aims to discuss the phenomenon of visual language emoji among internet users in social media (WhatsApp). The aspects that will be emphasized are language (grammar) of emoji. Research methods carried out is observation and descriptive. Method of data collection is the division of the questionnaire online, and communications in WA screenshot that uses emoji icons. The research result show that emoji is a language (grammar) used in communicating in social media. Emoji language has dominated the conversation or message written on the social media and emoji (WA) as a language (syntax, semantics, and pragmatics) is part of the sentence, punctuation, expression, expressing feelings and thoughts to the opponent talk. The language of emoji expression indicates that the emoji can represent the thoughts and feelings instead of using verbal language. Thus, emoji is composed of two directions, i.e. language and parole. The language of emoji is the social institution of emoji (grammar) in social media, and the individual is the parole act, an actualized manifestation of the function of the emoticons language in syntactic, semantic and pragmatic.

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## 1. Introduction

Based on the data of the Association of Internet service provider Indonesia, the number of internet users in Indonesia has exceeded 50% of the total population of Indonesia (132.7 million users from 256.2 million of Indonesia's total population in the year 2017). Of the total internet users, based on gender, 51.43% are male and female 48.57%. Furthermore, based on the content of the media frequently visited internet, 62% or 82.2 million is social media (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp). As much as 31.3 million people using the internet for updating information, 27.6 million related jobs, 17.9 million to fill the free time, 13.6 million about socialization, educational information about

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12.2 million, 11.7 million and 10.4 million related to the business and looking for goods (Hasyim, 2018:503).

The era of information technology has changed the way of thinking people of the world. Based on the results of the survey conducted Vulchanova (2017), to put his sons, mothers in the United Kingdom using the tablet in deals with a story or a fairy tale before sleep (Vulchanova,2017 et al.). To make children eat voraciously, mothers airing stories children's animated video via Youtube (Hasyim, 2018). In the U.S., a survey of parents with children aged 2-4 months (Zimmerman et al., 2007) show that at the age of 3 months, around 40% of children regularly watch TV, DVDs or videos, and at the period of 24 months the number increased up to 90%. Ferguson and Donellan (2014) explain that the baby without media exposure shows lower language development compared with exposure to the media. Research in the U.S. shows that the robot ' social ' positive impact on the development of child language (Owen & Westlund, 2016).

The visual language of communication has dominated internet users on social media. Various surveys have found that emoji as a visual language that is used to reveal things (feelings and thoughts). As many as 48% of the text used in the emoji is Instagram. Facebooker uses emoji 33.5% in communicating, and WhatsApp (WA) uses emoji as a more practical visual language in conveying messages and expressing feelings and ideas (Kurniawan, 2018). The results of research by Gabriel and Abdullah (2013) stated that in communicating between users of social media, emoji are used as nonverbal cues, language, and face-to-face interaction. One's self-expression is represented through the language of emoji.

In social media conversations using text verbal and nonverbal text (emoji) in expressing emotions and determine the meaning of the senders improve effectiveness in communicating. However, the phenomenon of social media users uses emoji not only as a visual language in conveying emotions and thoughts but have become part of the structure of the text (sentence). Conversational sentences used in the social media conversation always no longer pay attention to the punctuation. However, the sentences end with emoji in the closing sentence. Punctuation as symbols to show the structure and organization of writing, as well as intonation and pauses that are used by the sender and then punctuation help recipients in the reading of a message through the sentence, has been combined with emoji. The phenomenon of social media conversations in a text, emoji became part of sentence structure.

Research from various perspectives about emoji described at the beginning of this paper, and this research focused emoji in an aspect of Linguistics. The research questions that can be asked is: How does the use of language (grammar) in social media

from the perspective of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, and how users of emoji in parole (follow up said) in social media. The object of this research focuses on social media WhatsApp (WA).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Emoji

Danesi (2017) provides an explanation that the emoji is a term in the language of Japan, meaning 'image' and 'letter'. Emoji function adds the effectiveness of the conversation message and emphasizes the meaning in the conversation (2017). Asteroff (1987) defined as relational emoji icon. Meanwhile, emoji is described as a character that can be searched on a computer that is used when communicating via a computer (Sanderson, 1993). Definition of emoji also raised by Danet, Ruedenberg-Wright, and Rosenbaum-Tamari (1997) which explains that the emoji is iconicity to express emotion or intention to tag someone as not serious. Other opinion about emoji is sourced from Rezabek and Cochenour (1998) stating that the emoji as visual cues that are formed from the usual symbol typefaces when reading upside down will represent the feelings or emotions. Emoji is created as compensation from the inability of the delivery tone of voice, expression, or gesture or posture in written communication. Therefore, emoji can bridge the separation between the message face to face conversations with the writing as well as give an idea to the reader about what is meant by the author through the display of pictures of facial expressions. Asterof (1987) termed the emoji as systematic iconicity. Emoji has meaning, and character similarities towards the sign referred to. Emoji icons represent the character or State of psychology that uses. So, when a user of social media is reading emoji on text messages, these icons reflect on the characteristics of the sender. Emoji has been used in all the social media (Facebook, Instagram, and WA) and the frequency of its use is increasing. This increase is in line with the rise of internet users, especially in social media.

### 2.2. Language dan Parole

Saussure proposed the linguistic concepts as the embodiment of one over the reality of language, called *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* is the language of social systems have a Convention with a social system that can be used in a given community. *Langue* is a system which has its structure and exists in every individual that can be mutually

understood and produce effects. Meanwhile, *parole* is the use of individually over the language that has become a social system for speakers (Saussure, 1959).

Then, the concept of language and *parole* is developed by Barthes. According to him, *langue* can produce a variety of a language that has its system and set it apart with a variety of other languages. As has been said Barthes *The Language of Fashion* (2006), that:

“We know that for Saussure human language can be studied from two directions, that of *langue* and that of *parole*. *Langue* is the social institution, independent of the individual; it is a normative reserve from which the individual draws their *parole*, ‘a virtual system that is actualized only in and through *parole*’. *Parole* is the individual act, ‘an actualized manifestation of the function of language’, language being a generic term for both *langue* and *parole*.<sup>18</sup> It seems to be extremely useful, by way of an analogy to clothing, to identify an institutional, fundamentally social, reality, which, independent of the individual, is like the systematic, normative reserve from which the individual draws their clothing, and which, in correspondence to Saussure’s *langue*, we propose to call dress. And then to distinguish this from a second, individual reality, the very act of ‘getting dressed,’ in which the individual actualizes on their body the general inscription of dress, and which, corresponding to Saussure’s *parole*, we will call dressing. Dress and dressing form then a generic whole, for which we propose to retain the word clothing” (Barthes, 2006).

Concerning the opinion of Barthes, *langue* and *parole* can produce a variety of a language, such as the language of fashion, food, cars, etc., which are no structures or rules that characterize the range of styles. Saussure gave an example of a horse on a game of chess. In *langue*, the rules should be L-shaped horse pion, in *parole*, though horse pion materials replaced, e.g., made of catapult, or pawn the horse breaks down and is replaced by a stone that is not shaped like a horse, then in language stay abreast of the rules in the game of chess, that is must be L-shaped. Thus, *langue* and *parole* generate a wide range of styles, to communicate both individually and in groups — for example, the communication language in a community.

### 3. Research Method

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of emoji from aspects of *langue* (grammar) and *parole*. Researchers observe aspects of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in visual communication emoji in visual media WA. This research use analyses semiotic, using the model of semiotics Roland Barthes (*langue* and *parole*). The source

of the data on the results of the questionnaire study was presented online on the social media WA, Tweeter and Line. Respondents to answer twenty questions asked are on the line.

Data that has been collected as many as 150. Based on the data, the characteristics of the respondents is the number of respondents based on gender is male as much as 64.2% 35.8% male. The number of respondents based on their age, 61% were aged 19 to 20 years old. Thus, the work of more than 50% of the respondents is students and employees. Social media is the most widely used in communicating is WA, which reached 94%. The behavior of the respondent based on the effectiveness of social media used in conveying a message (SMS) is the percentage by number of WA, 95.5%. The behavior of the respondents based on a picture or icon of the most widely used and useful in communicating in WA are emoji, with as many as 91%. Furthermore, the shape of emoji most used by respondents to demonstrate is a facial expression, reached 89%.

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. Languge dan parole emoji

Emoji in WA is a languge that has to possess social rules that are shared in the form of categories, smiley and browse (facial expression), animals and nature, food and drink, activity, travel and places, objects, symbols, and flags. In parole, how individually using the emoji forms based on a psychiatric state of internet users and the communication situation.

Based on the results of data analysis, in parole, emoji are the most often used individually can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Emoji form used.

This data shows that internet users can express their emotions and feelings of the individual using the emoji (smiley and people) that can give you an idea of the mood and feel for the user in the conversation in WA. Emoji forms of communication also show that there is an attitude of open (public spaces) for users in expressing feelings and emotions.

In parole level, the reason the respondent to use emoji is as shown in Figure 2.

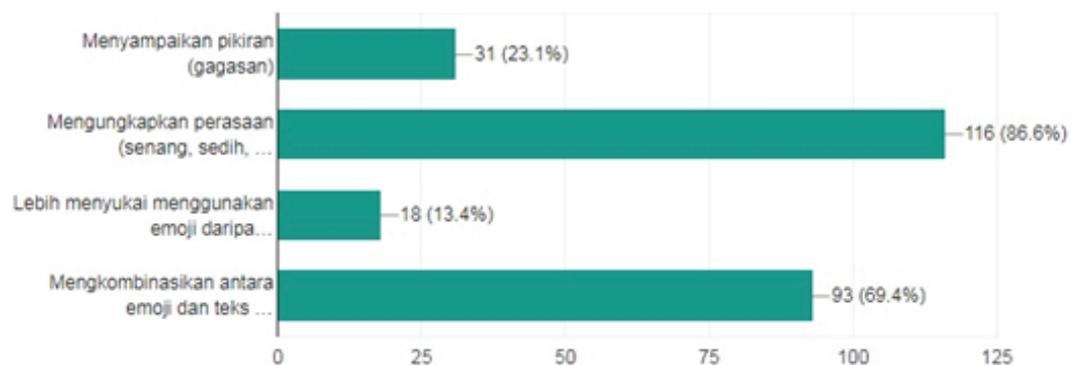


Figure 2: The reason the respondent to use emoji.

Categories already available WA emoji is a language that each type has been given the identity of emoji so that respondent can use based on the context of the talks. The data in Figure 2 shows that as much as 86.6% of respondents use the emoji for expressing feelings and the most dominant aspect of the subjectivity employed respondents in communicating. Parole emoji shows how freedom of expression in public space (social media) that can be seen, not only between the sender and the caller but the rest of the participants, for example in one group WA.

## 4.2. The Syntax of Emoji

The conversation via SMS shows that emoji is a part of the text. Thus, the text of the conversation consisted of verbal and nonverbal language (emoji). Preparation of a sentence through the SMS indicates that respondents using a combination of verbal language and the language of emoji. This is apparent in the preparation of a sentence, where the emoji is placed at the beginning and end of the sentence. Based on the data, as many as 76% of the respondents use the emoji at the end of the sentence. The function of emoji is closing in a sentence. Emoji serves as punctuation.

Based on Figure 3, a total of 76.9% emoji are placed on the final sentence, 14.2% in the middle of a sentence, and 9% at the beginning of the sentence. One example of the use of emoji in the end of the sentence can be found in Figure 4.

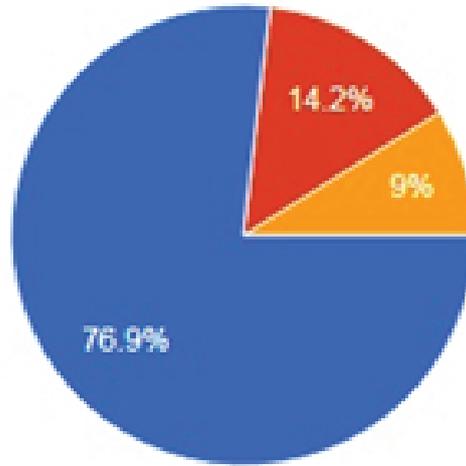


Figure 3: The position of the emoji in a sentence.

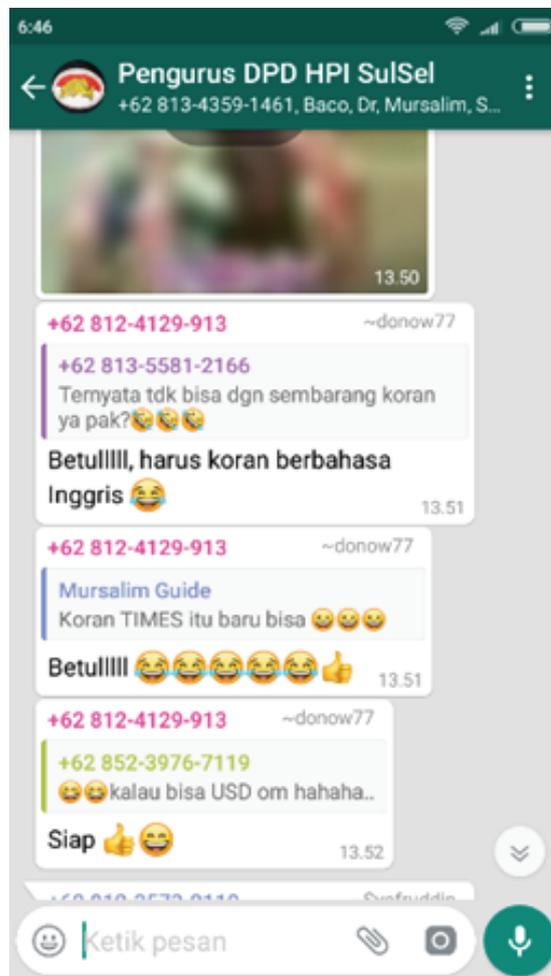
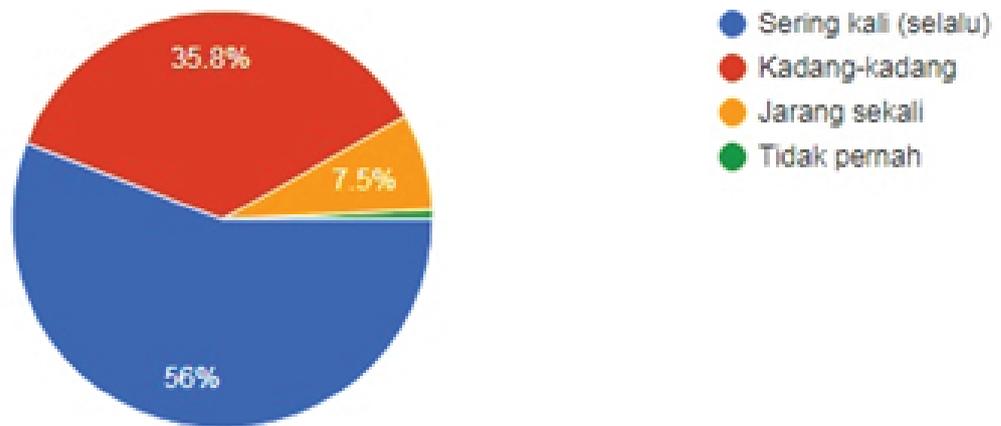


Figure 4: The placement of the emoji in a sentence.

Emoji are becoming an element of the sentence can be described in the results of the respondents about the use of different combinations of verbal text (sentence) and emoji. Figure 5 shows that respondents prefer to communicate with a combination of verbal language and the emoji in conveying the message.



**Figure 5:** The frequency of use of emoji in a sentence.

In conveying a message (SMS), respondents composing sentences with verbal language combinations and emoji in communicating ideas and expressing feelings. So even when they answer message from the receiver. The message is responded to and sent with a combination of verbal language and emoji. Other data sources also indicated that the respondents less agreed to convey with emoji. In the preparation of a sentence, emoji function to emphasize the message being delivered. 4.3 Semantic Emoji

### 4.3. Semantic of Emoji

Type emoji in the seconded WA 'smiley and people', 'animals and nature', 'food and drink', 'activity', 'travel and places', 'objects', 'symbols', and 'flags' have had the denotative meaning. Naming each emoji emphasizes the uses of emoji. For example, a smiley emoji and browse some examples of which are given in table 1.

Emoji names are describing their identity. For example, emoji of 'grinning face' shows the meaning of pleasure and joy, so that the user can use the emoji WA to express feelings. List of names of emoji is the purpose of denoting, which became the basis for the user to convey meanings of connotation as a form of expression and the expression of feelings. Can be mentioned in a sentence using an example in Figure 6.

TABLE 1: Semantic of Emoji.

Emoji	Semantic
	<p>Grinning Face: A yellow face with simple, open eyes and a broad, open smile, showing upper teeth and tongue on some platforms. Often conveys general pleasure and good cheer or humor. (<a href="https://emojipedia.org/grinning-face/">https://emojipedia.org/grinning-face/</a>)</p>
	<p>Face Blowing a Kiss: A yellow face winking with puckered lips blowing a kiss, depicted as a small, <b>red heart</b>. May represent a kiss goodbye or good night and convey feelings of love and affection more generally. <a href="https://emojipedia.org/face-throwing-a-kiss/">https://emojipedia.org/face-throwing-a-kiss/</a>)</p>
	<p>Loudly Crying Face: A yellow face with an open mouth wailing and streams of heavy tears flowing from closed eyes. May convey inconsolable grief but also other intense feelings, such as uncontrollable laughter or overwhelming joy. (<a href="https://emojipedia.org/loudly-crying-face/">https://emojipedia.org/loudly-crying-face/</a>)</p>

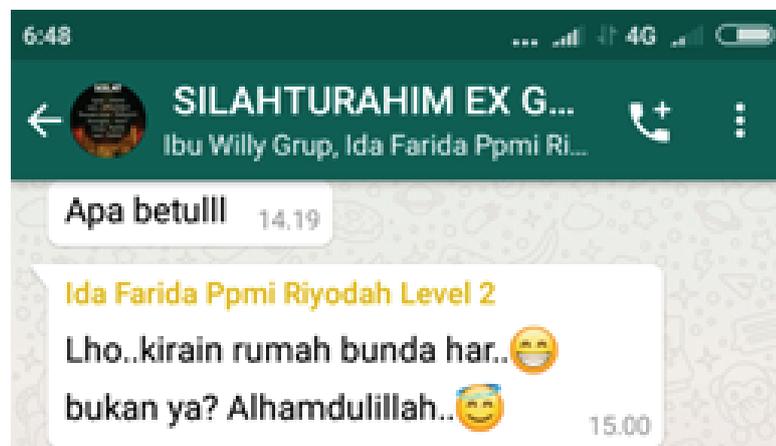
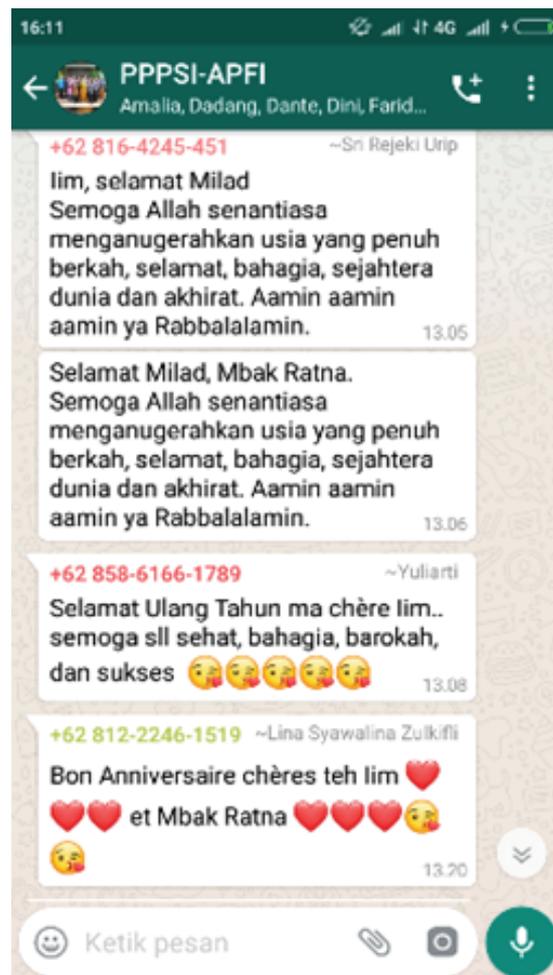


Figure 6: use of emojis in sentences.

#### 4.4. Pragmatics Emoji

Pragmatics emoji shows interactions conversations (follow up said) between the speaker and your opponent talk. Through pragmatic emoji, emotional relationships are known to be involved in the conversation in WA. In pragmatics, emoji can serve as a medium of delivering personal messages and in General. Emoji can demonstrate communication between persona, relaxed or formal, social relationships, and the relationship between hierarchy persona. For example, the teacher with pupil, parent and child relationships and relationships friends, colleagues, etc.

One example in Figure 7 is the WA group of French Association Teachers Throughout Indonesia (PPPSI). The context of his talks was one of its members is being repeated,



**Figure 7:** Use of Pragmatic Emoji in Sentences.

and other WA members congratulations. Pragmatics emoji in conversation indicates relationships of colleagues' fellow members and the relationship of familiarity through the use of emoji. Birthday congratulation concludes with the emoji function strengthens the meaning and relationship of fellow group members. This pragmatic emoji is called interpersonal function that language of emoji is used by the speaker to participate in communicative acts with other people, to take on roles and to express and misunderstand feelings, attitude and judgments (Suhadi, 2018).

## 5. Conclusion

Refers to the concept of *langue* and *parole* Barthes, emoji is a langue that social rules are the basis or guidelines for social media users in WA. Parole or speech act can be seen on the uses emoji from aspects of syntax, semantics, and pragmatic. Emoji is language in the world of social media (WA, Facebook, Tweeter, and Line-up), used its

users. The users of emoji in social media can understand each other in delivering the message. The emoji is langue social rules lasts conventionally conceived jointly by users in social media (WA). Level of parole shows how individual users are expressing thoughts and feelings through the emoji. Thus, text in social media (WA) built on the verbal and nonverbal language elements (emoji). Emoji function strengthens the meaning and social connections between users in communicating.

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