



## How Emoji as A Tool for Digital Communication Affirm Meaning in Online Interactions: A

### Social Semiotics

Khairun Niswa

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara

Email: [khairunniswa@umsu.ac.id](mailto:khairunniswa@umsu.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the semiotic meaning of emojis used in WhatsApp communication and the emotions felt by users when using these emojis. The research data were obtained through screenshots of WhatsApp conversations of 4<sup>th</sup>-semester English education students and through interviews with them. Data collection methods used observation, documentation by collecting screenshots of WhatsApp conversations, and interviews for data analysis using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic trichotomy theory (sign, object, and interpretant). The results of the study include data on the types of yellow face emoji commonly used in the WhatsApp application. A total of 16 face emojis were found in user conversations conducted between July and August 2023. The research has found that face emojis can effectively convey a variety of emotions. The research findings show that as many as 16 facial emojis are used to express various emotions, both positive and negative. The right use of emoji can help in conveying the meaning of the message clearly and strengthen the relationship between users. However, indiscriminate use of emojis can change the meaning and cause conflict or tension in communication that has the potential to damage existing relationships. Therefore, it is important to use emoji wisely and pay attention to the context of communication.

**Keywords:** Semiotics Theory, WhatsApp, Emoji Positive, Negative Emoji, Expression, Guidelines, Sign

**Publisher's Note:** All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations or the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.