

## Verbal and Visual Expression of Emotions on Kaskus: A Semiotic Study

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**Abstract.** This research investigates the types of emoticons which occurred on Kaskus. This is a qualitative research. The writer take the data from Kaskus, therefore it is a forum in the internet which has grown to be one of the most popular websites in Indonesia. To identify the types of Emotions on Kaskus, the writer analyzed the data using Ekman (2003) . From the discussions, there are verbal and non verbal sign in the emoticons that appear on Kaskus. The meaning of verbal sign and nonverbal sign in emoticon "*marah*" represents anger emotion. Emoticon "*Ngakak*" and "*thumbup*" represent enjoyable emotion. Emoticon "*Sorry*" and "*Cool*" represent sadness emotion. For future studies need to be conducted with an increased sample by using another media such as Whatsapp, YM, etc.

*Keywords:* Emoticons, emotions, Enjoyable Emotion, Anger Emotion

**Abstrak.** Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui makna emoticon di Kaskus. penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif. Penulis mengambil data dari Kaskus, yang merupakan forum di internet yang tumbuh menjadi website terpopuler di Indonesia. Untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis emosi dalam Kaskus, penulis menggunakan teori dari Ekman (2003). Ada tanda verbal dan tanda nonverbal pada emoticon di Kaskus. Emoticon "*marah*" menggambarkan emosi marah. Emoticon "*ngakak*" dan "*thumbup*" menggambarkan emosi bahagia. Emoticon "*Sorry*" dan "*cool*" menggambarkan emosi sedih. Untuk penelitian selanjutnya dapat menggunakan media lain seperti whatsapp, YM, dan lain-lain.

*Kata kunci:* Emoticon, Emosi, Emosi Bahagia, Emosi Marah

### Introduction

Nowadays, internet has developed into an effective and global media. Instant messaging, chat, rooms, and personal Web Sites increase their occurrences in cyber; making them a medium where people can keep in touch with others around the world and get information and being entertained. One of the most crucial elements in cyber is images. The nature communication on the internet allows people to express their thoughts and feelings by using images that represent their mood or facial expression. It is called emoticons, which are often used for stressing the statements particularly in online communication and alerting the responder to the tone or mood of the statements markers. Emoticons include verbal and visual expression of emotion, because not only verbal communication such as text but also the facial expression itself.

Cyber emoticons which are widely used nowadays is Kaskus emoticon. Kaskus is a forum in the internet which has grown to be one of the most popular websites in Indonesia and has been considered as the largest Indonesian online community since its members reach over one million in 2010. In Kaskus, the emoticons are different from other forums. They have their characteristic and the member mostly as a language of communication.

In this research, the writer limit the issues that are analyzed from Kaskus. The formulation of the study is What kinds of signs in the emoticons do appear on Kaskus? and What are the meanings of the verbal and nonverbal signs in each emoticon that appears on Kaskus?

The study titled "Verbal and Visual Expression of Emotions on Kaskus: A Semiotic Study" analyzed in order to (1) Describe kinds of signs in the emoticons that appears on Kaskus; (2) De-

scribe the meaning of the verbal and nonverbal sign in each emoticons that appears on Kaskus.

In this research, the writer takes the data based on the emoticons on Kaskus. Through this method, the writer has to learn and understand about the emoticons, but it relies on more than a generalization corpus examined.

The writer tries to find the data from the emoticons on Kaskus. After the writer find the data about the emoticons on Kaskus, the writer analyzed the data. After the writer analyzes the data, the writer classifies them based on kinds of emotions or expressions. The writer conducts an analysis in terms of semiotics studies to get the meaning of each emoticons. The final step, the writer make conclusions from the analysis.

### **Semiotics as The Study of Sign**

Based on Chandler (2002:1) the shortest definition of Semiotics is the study of signs. Semiotics itself is very close to the signs as the subject of the study. In other definition, Eco (1979:7) argued that semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. The two dominant models of what constitutes a sign are those of the Ferdinand de Saussure and also Charles Sanders Peirce that mostly appear in the signs definition. Saussure (1983:20) offered a dyadic or two part model of signs (such as words), he defined a sign as being composed of a signifier and a signified. In other hand, it also can be replaced by the words that signifier as the sound patterns and signified as the concept. In the linguistics example, the word "open" when it is invested with meaning by someone who encounters it on a shop doorway is a sign consisting of (1) Signifier: the word "open."; (2) Signified (concept): that the shop is open for business.

In the same ways of formulating the models of signs, Charles Sanders Peirce in Innis (1985:28) formulated his model for the sign. In contrast to Saussure model, Peirce offered a triadic model. (1) The representamen: the form which the sign takes (not necessarily material); (2) An interpretant: not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign; (3) An object: to which the sign refers. In its simplest form, the Peirce a sign has been defined as something that relates to something else for someone in some respect or capacity.

According to Sobarna (2010:3) kemampuan berkomunikasi secara verbal adalah kesanggupan yang meliputi pengucapan, pengertian, kosakata, dan alur. It means that word, plot, and speaking are verbalsign or verbal communication. Interpretation of a verbal sign according to Jakobson (1959:233) can happen in three ways: intralingual, interlingual and

intersemiotic. In the case of intralingual translation, the changes take place within the same language. Thus a verbal sign (word) belonging to a particular language is replaced by another sign (word) belonging to the same language. Interlingual translation on the other hand can be seen as replacing a verbal sign with another sign but belonging to a different language. The last kind of explanation of verbal sign is the intersemiotic translation. Here more than focusing on the words, emphasis is on the overall message that needs to be conveyed. Thus the translator, instead of paying attention to the verbal signs, concentrates more on the information that is to be delivered.

Based on Peirce in Innis (1985: 5) a sign stands for something to the idea which it produces, or modifies that for which it stands is called its object; that which it conveys, its meaning; and the idea to which it gives rise, its interpretantion. According to Peirce in Innis (1985:8), a sign may be termed an icon, an index, or a symbol.

According to Peirce in Innis (1985: 8), an icon is a sign which refers to object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same whether any object actually exists or not. It means that an icon does not act as a sign; but this has nothing to do with its character as a sign. For example: a picture of your face is an icon of you.

According to Peirce in Innis (1985: 8), an index is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that object. It means that an index is affected by an object. According to Innis (1985: 9), an index is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if there is no interpretant. It means that a sign would lose the character and also its object, but it would not lose that character. For example: a man with a rolling gait. This is a probable indication that he is a sailor.

A Symbol is a sign that stands for its object by convention or agreement in specific context, Peirce in Danesi (2004: 27). It means that the sign is designed to encode a referent by convention or agreement. For example: A man walking with a child points his arm up into the air and says, "There is a balloon". The pointing arm is an essential part of the symbol. To Know the meaning of the symbol we can see it's meaning semantically.

### **Semantics as The Study of Meaning**

Leech (1981:9) explained that "Semantics (as the study of meaning) is central to study of communication; and as communication becomes more and more crucial factor in social organization, the need to understand it becomes more and more pressing." From Leech's explanation, the

writer concluded that Semantics is the study of meaning for communication.

Morris in Danesi (2004:9) called semantics as the study of the relations between signs and their basic meanings. From Morris's explanation, the writer concluded that Semantics is the study of the relations between signs and their basic meanings. From Leech and Morris explanations, the writer conclude that Semantics is the study of meaning.

### The Color Meaning

The human eye distinguishes colors using light sensitive cells in the retina. These sensors are rods and cones. The rods give us our night vision and can function in low intensities of light, but cannot distinguish color. So the colors relate to the eye and the perception of one thing or something that impress the eyes. The producers of the products use this theory to impress the customers in purchasing their products. Color is one of the main elements in the packages of the product. It function is as the impressive point to the customers. In this research, the researcher explains about the meaning of the color and also the relationship between color and linguistics.

Eiseman (2000:9) categorized the colors based on the meaning. Here are the colors and their general meaning:

RED in its various incarnations has more personal associations than any other color. It can typify the lowly stop sign, or the inference of a bordello. Recognized as a stimulant, red is inherently exciting, and can be useful in restaurants and other high-power settings. The volume of red is directly related to the amount of energy perceived. Small amounts can add vigor to an otherwise calm space, without the negative connotations of broad use. Some common words associated with red: power, energy, excitement, strength, hot, seductive, passionate, aggressive, attention-getter, fire, blood, danger.

ORANGE, a close relative to red, sparks more controversy than any other hue. There is usually a strong positive or negative association ranging from juvenile plastic toys, the fruit of the same name, or the radiant colors of a sunset. Orange has more broad-based appeal in forms such as rust, terra cotta, or apricot and is powerful as a component in "ethnic" palettes. As with red, small doses can be very energizing and flattering. It can also bring needed warmth to cold climates, or windowless environments. Some common words associated with orange: radiant, bold, warm, flamboyant, vibrant, happy, harvest, autumn, fruity, friendly, garish, juvenile.

YELLOW is traditionally associated with enlightenment, and its close associate, gold, with wealth and success. In its many variations, from

custard to mellow amber to the very active primary, yellow will advance from surrounding colors and instill energy and optimism. The color of the sun, yellow will warm and lift spirits, raise expectations and is appropriate to areas that require this related mood or where attention is needed. Some words associated with yellow: friendly, joyful, light, free, open, vigorous, sunny, stimulating, cheery, fun, luminous, and exuberant.

GREEN requires two discussions. As green occupies more space in the spectrum visible to the human eye, it can cover a lot of territory of perception. Green is so pervasive in the natural world, landscape and seascape, that it is the ideal backdrop because we are so used to seeing it everywhere as such. The "natural" side of green, from forest to lime, is seen as refreshing and tranquil, with a natural balance of cool and warm (blue+yellow). There is, however, the "institutional" side of green, associated with illness, or Government Issue. Aside from the more slimy, or bilious greens that conjure up negative associations, green is second only to blue as a favorite color. Some words associated with green: restful, tranquil, soothing, cool, refreshing, traditional, stable, conservative, calm, spacious, and relaxing.

BLUE is the overwhelming "favorite color." It is the sky and the promise of beyond. It is the color of no-frills, honest, working-class uniforms.

The collective color of the spirit, blue invokes the qualities of rest. The distant receding character makes blue ideal for small spaces, or places for study and reflection. The calming qualities of blue inherently slow down activity and cool down hot surroundings. Some common words associated with blue: clean, relaxing, serene, refreshing, classic, conservative, traditional, hospitable, professional, dependable, confident, and nautical.

PURPLE embodies the balance of red stimulation and blue calm. This dichotomy can cause unrest and uneasiness unless the undertone is clearly defined, and the blue or red-based purple can then be characterized by the prevailing undertone. A sense of exclusivity and the mystic and royal qualities associated with purple come from its early rarity and expense. Some words associated with purple: regal, sophisticated, rich, dignified, magic, spiritual, mysterious, exotic, and melancholy.

WHITE in both English and Chinese, whites denote purity and innocence. This is why the brides are dressed in white in western countries. A white lie in English is a lie that does no harm to others and it is merely more convenient or polite than telling the truth. In Chinese it is explicitly associated with purity and innocence. It is also associated with meaning of invalidation and terror. In English, white is sometimes associated with some-

thing bad. In English expression such as white elephant, white feather and white night, white has bad or unpleasant connotation. White elephant is something useless, seldom used, or too costly to be worth maintaining. White feather, derived from cock-fighting in which a game cock displaying the white rim of feather under his hackles acknowledgement defeat and wants to give up, is a symbol of fear, cowardice or timidity. A white night is simply a sleepless night.

**BLACK:** Black is often associated with negative qualities such as illegality, darkness, hardship, and sadness. For instance, black market. In other words, black is associated to the eternity and the strength.

**PINK:** Pink is often associated with the feminine and fragility. Pink usually signifies women and its sort of things related to them. Sensitive is also signified by pink. Based on Kandinsky (1972: 36), colors are discussed in the context of 'opponent pairs' in groups in which a single major color is bordered by two others derived from it.

**YELLOW:** Yellow is regarded by Kandinsky as a basic color that is inherently 'warm and powerful' and its effect is 'eccentric'. The radiant intensity of this color increases with lighter coloration, i.e., upon increasing addition of white to the yellow. Yellow is maddening, psychologically unsettling and angry looking.

**BLUE:** According to Kandinsky, blue is a basic essentially warm color, (but he later contradicts himself and sees blue as cool). It is a 'concentric' color and hence its effect is self-centering. Kandinsky states that blue arouses sensations of purity and longing for the infinite and with increase of tone, i.e. with the addition of black; the above described qualities assume connotations of sadness and mourning.

**GREEN:** Green is the intermediate between yellow and blue with all the implications thereof. According to Kandinsky's approach, on the artist's palette green is obtained by cooling yellow by the addition of blue. Upon the mixing of a small amount of blue with yellow a 'non-tangible sickly' hue is produced, but if an additional amount of blue is added, 'normal' green appears. Green implies utter complacency and absolute rest; this being so since the all-energetic yellow is countered by the complacent blue. It therefore follows that green pleases the eye of the weary observer since it elicits only static quietude: however, prolonged viewing leads to boredom. Despite the above, Kandinsky states that green are potentially reassuring, a property arising from its two constituent components.

According to Turner (2009: 34), the meanings of some colors cross the boundaries of culture and language, representing a shared bank of memories that go back to our distant ancestors,

while others are specific to cultures, locations and time. And throughout history our response to art, clothing, nature and the built environment is in large part related to the symbolic associations we have with color. So we can say that colors are the magical threads that weave throughout every culture. Turner (2009: 34) classified the color meanings in some culture. Here are the colors and their culture meaning:

**RED:** for the Japanese, red is a national symbol of blood and passion on one hand, and a religious symbol on the other, as the color is reserved for the robes of the second highest abbot in Zen Buddhist practices. For those who practice Feng Shui, red is used to attract positive energy and many Chinese (and other Feng Shui adherents) paint their doors red to welcome chi to their homes. A new coat of red for the front door is a traditional New Year's practice. In China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, red is the symbol of fire, summer, the south, good luck, joy, fertility and fortune, all good reasons why red is the traditional color for Chinese brides. Packages wrapped in red are given on happy occasions and red envelopes containing money are traditional gifts for children on the Lunar New Year. However, across Southeast Asia, a letter written in red ink means the writer is angry or the relationship is severed, and to sign your name in red ink is considered unlucky. Many Indian brides also wear red wedding gowns, as red is the color associated with Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and beauty.

**ORANGE:** Throughout Asia, orange, particularly a warm saffron, is freighted with symbolism, as it is among the most common color of Buddhist monk's robes. One legend links the orange, rust and yellow robes of the monks to the changing colors of leaves, a constant reminder of the need to let go. A more prosaic explanation is that very early in Buddhist history the robes were dyed with familiar vegetable dyes including jackfruit, cumin and saffron and that these colors became standardized even as the religion spread out from its roots in northern India across Asia. For most of Asia, orange symbolizes happiness, plenitude and good health, while peach, a tint of orange, represents immortality.

**YELLOW:** Revered in China as a color of honor, reserved for royalty and high priests, yellow also represents the gods and power. According to legend, yellow became the symbol for the earth and creation because of the yellow soil in northern China, home of the earliest of ruling dynasties. In Malaysia, yellow is also associated with royalty and the Malay sultans; it also represents Islam, the country's official religion. In Indonesia, yellow is the color of Garuda, the mythical bird that is the country's national symbol. In Zen monasteries, yellow is worn by the third most se-

nior abbot. At spring festivals in India yellow is omnipresent: Participants wear yellow clothing, eat yellow food and sprinkle yellow turmeric powder over statues of the gods associated with the spring holidays. In many traditional Indian weddings, the couple smears turmeric extract on their skin, essentially dying themselves yellow, a practice believed to bring them good luck, health, wealth and many children.

**GREEN:** Across China, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan, soft jade greens, influenced by nature, are prized. In China's Forbidden City, green roof tiles cover the wing where the young princes resided. A Chinese tradition holds that to dream in green is a sign that good fortune is on its way, but if the color pervades the entire dream, it signifies that he would soon find himself in peril. In Muslim tradition green signifies the Prophet Muhammad and therefore represents the entire religion. Being Islam's sacred color, green is reserved as a special sign of respect and worship in Malaysia and Singapore.

**BLUE:** Surprisingly for a color that surrounds us through sea and sky and, in the form of indigo, is one of our earliest dyestuffs, the word for blue appeared in all the world's languages long after the words for black, white, brown, red, green and yellow. The linking of blue with water and heaven runs through almost every culture, but in India the color is especially revered. It symbolizes the heavens, mercy, love and the mysterious nature of truth. Lord Vishnu and his many aspects, including Shiva and Krishna, are often depicted with blue skin, where the darker the color means the deeper the mystery.

**PURPLE:** In ancient times, a mollusk native to the Mediterranean was the primary source for the color purple. It took over 12,000 mollusks to gather a few drops of colorant and therefore, the extremely expensive color became associated with royalty and the upper echelons of religion. The secret to this particular color was kept by the Phoenicians for centuries, further enhancing its mystique that even far-off cultures such as India, China and Japan came to regard purple as an imperial color. For example, purple (violet) robes are reserved for the highest ranking Zen Buddhist abbot while many Chinese associate purple with propitious omens.

**BROWN:** The color of rich, fertile soil and the bark of trees, brown surrounds us in many ways, so it makes sense that it is one of few colors besides the main primary and secondary colors to be named in early languages. In contrast to European cultures where brown was often viewed as drab, other cultures found a particular beauty in brown. In Japan, brown and other earthy hues play a significant role in Shibui tradition, an aesthetic that honors simple, subtle and unobtrusive

beauty. While in Arabic languages the word for brown is derived from the same root as that of the word for coffee (bunn), while the word for dust, which in most of the Arab world meant desert sand, is khaak, from which we get khaki.

## Emoticons as The Visual Expression of Emotions

Emoticons derives from two separate words 'emotion' and 'icon'. Emotions refers to tendency for having special feeling when it is faced with particular object in an environment (James in Sukyadi, 2011: 40). From two separate words 'emotion' and 'icon', we can say that emoticons are seen as iconic sign since they resemble the object, they represent particularly the implication of the face expression showed.

Ekman (2003: 144) explains five emotions that human expresses. The description will be explained below. (1) Sadness and agony are unhappy emotions caused by a great loss of something or someone. Agony deals actively with the cause which makes it sort suffering; meanwhile, sadness is more passive feeling that lasts longer than agony. The facial expression can be seen as mouth open, corners of lips down, raised cheek, eyes look downward and upper eyelids droop; (2) Anger is the face of attack or violence caused by disappointment, frustrated, revenge, or when someone hurt physically either to himself or to other that he cares the most. The facial expression can be seen as eyebrows pulled down, eyes wide-open, hard-staring and lips pressed; (3) Surprise and fear often comes in sequence. Surprise lasting only a few seconds then merges into fear, amusement, relief, anger, disgust and so forth. It is commonly caused by the threat of harm either physically or psychological. The facial expression on surprise is eyes wide open, eyebrows raised and jaw drops open. While in fear, eyebrows raised, jaw drops open, upper eyelids raised and straight staring; (4) Disgust and contempt are quite similar emotion but differ in intention. Disgust is a feeling of aversion, not only tastes, smells, touches or thought, but also actions and appearance of people or even ideas. The facial expression seen as nose wrinkling, upper lip raised and eyebrows pulled down. Contempt is related to disgust but in lighter intention. The expression is one side of the face which corner lip tightened and slightly raised; (5) Enjoyable emotions such as pleasure, amusement, excitement, relief, wonder and ecstasy has an expression of cheek pushes up, mouth drawn back at corners and wrinkled skin under the eyes.

According to (Peirce in Innis, 1985: 10), "icons are the only means of directly communicating an idea. It means that to communicate an idea we can use sign, because sign consist icon. For

example the icon 'red' in the traffic light indicates to stop. So we can say that icon 'red in the traffic light' communicating an idea 'indicates to stop'.

### Data From Kaskus.

#### Emoticon Expresses Anger



Marah

The verbal sign in this emoticon is "marah" (translated as mad in English). The non verbal sign in this emoticon is red person with wide eyes, eye-brows raised, and mouth open.

Based on the first order signification, the emoticon describes a red person with wide eyes, eye-brows raised, and mouth open. This facial expression represents anger. The color in emoticon "Marah" (mad) is red. Red means to express emotion of danger, passionate, hot, aggressive, and power, so the meaning of Red in the emoticons "marah" are danger and passionate, which are represented as mad.

#### Emoticon Expresses enjoyable



Ngakak

The verbal sign in this emoticon is "ngakak" (translated as laugh or laugh out loud in English). The non verbal sign in this emoticon describes a man in orange color with a big grin, closed eyes, cheeks pushed up, and wrinkled skin under the eyes.

This emoticon describes a man in orange color with a big grin, closed eyes, cheeks pushed up, and wrinkled skin under the eyes. This facial expression represents enjoyable emotion. The color in emoticon 'ngakak' (laugh out loud) is Orange. Orange means happy, friendly, and warm, so the meaning of orange color in the emoticons 'ngakak' are happy and friendly, which are represented as happiness and enjoyable.

#### Thumbup



There are verbal sign and non verbal sign in this emoticon. The verbal sign in this emoticon

is "Thumbup". The non verbal sign in this emoticon describes a face in orange color with a big grin, cheeks pushed up, and eyes wide open.

"Thumbup" is one of several emoticons on Kaskus forum that represents enjoyable emotion, because "Thumbup" means expression of the face with the corners of the mouth turned up, showing big amusement, pleasure, etc. This emoticon describes a man in orange color with a big grin, eyes wide open, and cheeks pushed up. This facial expression represents enjoyable emotion.

The color in emoticon 'Big Smile' is Orange. Orange means happy, harvest, and warm, so the meaning of orange color in the emoticons 'Thumbup' are happy and friendly, which are represented as happiness and enjoyable.

The verbal sign "Thumbup" which means thumbs up and non verbal signs: a face in orange color with a big grin, eyes wide open, and cheeks pushed up, in emoticon "Thumbup" represent enjoyable. Emoticon "Big Smile" expresses enjoyable emotion.

#### Emoticon expresses sadness emotion



Sorry

From this picture we can see that there are verbal sign and non verbal sign in this emoticon. The verbal sign in this emoticon is "Sorry". The non verbal sign in this emoticon describes a face in yellow color with corners of lips down, eyes look downward, and upper eyelids droop.

"Sorry" is one of several emoticons on Kaskus forum that represents sadness emotion, because "Sorry" means expression of the face with corners of lips down, eyes look downward, and upper eyelids droop that caused by a great loss of something or someone.

This emoticon describes a face in yellow color with corners of lips down, eyes look downward, and upper eyelids droop. This facial expression represents sadness emotion. The color in emoticon "Sorry" is yellow. The color yellow in this emoticon means maddening, so the meaning of yellow color in the emoticon 'Sorry' is unfriendly, which are represented as sadness emotion.

#### Cool



From this picture we can see that there are verbal sign and non verbal sign in this emoticon.

The verbal sign in this emoticon is "Cool".

The nonverbal sign in this emoticon describes a face in blue color with corners of lips down, eyes look downward and upper eyelids droop.

"Cool" is one of several emoticons on Kaskus forum that represents sadness emotion, because "Cool" means expression of the face with corners of lips down, eyes look downward and upper eyelids droop that caused by a great loss of something or someone.

This emoticons describes a face in yellow color with corners of lips down, eyes look downward and upper eyelids droop. This facial expression represents sadness emotion.

The color in emoticon "Cool" is blue. The color blue in this emoticon means sadness, so the meaning of blue color in the emoticon 'Cool' is unhappy which represents sadness emotions.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

From the discussions, there are verbal and non verbal sign in the emoticons that appear on Kaskus. The meaning of verbal sign and nonverbal sign in emoticon Marah represents anger emotion. The meaning of verbal sign and nonverbal sign in emoticon "Ngakak" and "thumbup" represent enjoyable emotion. The meaning of verbal sign and nonverbal sign in the emoticon "Sorry" and "Cool" represent sadness emotion.

Future studies need to be conducted with an increased sample by using another media such as; Whatsapp, Yahoo Messenger in order to contextualize and code emoticons factors for creating and presenting in networking site, as well as language development.

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