

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of study is provided in this chapter. The study background, which includes earlier studies that are used as references when working on current research, research questions, research objective, research significance, and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

Language is a complex and dynamic system of communication that humans use to express thoughts, ideas, and emotions. It encompasses spoken and written words, gestures, symbols, and rules for combining them (Hastuti, 2023). Language serves as a fundamental tool for conveying information, sharing knowledge, and fostering social interaction. It is a unique feature of human cognition and culture, allowing us to express our creativity, transmit our culture, and understand the world around us. In essence, language is the bridge that connects individuals, facilitates understanding, and shapes our collective human experience.

The widespread influence of technology causing a fundamental upheaval in the language landscape of the digital age. The emergence of digital tools has brought about a significant shift in the conventional approaches to language learning and usage, resulting in a new era of language acquisition and communication. These modifications have an effect on more than just interpersonal communication, and also have an effect on language learning itself. Digital tools have not only transformed the methods in which people converse, but have also changed the approaches taken in learning new languages. There is a clear connection between language development and the internet. Examples of these influences include the employment of many languages in online contexts, the incorporation of social media, messaging apps, translation services, and emojis in everyday speech. This transformation in language acquisition and communication is a double edged sword that offers both previously unheard-of benefits and fresh difficulties.

The complexities of online communication, particularly text-based interactions, are now essential to language development as provide a means of acquiring new languages and establishing international relationships. The seemingly insignificant visual components known as emojis have become an interesting topic of study in the field of cyberpragmatics. These brief yet powerful pictures are essential for expressing feelings, giving online discussions context, and drawing attention from linguistic and pragmatic theories. In summary, the digital age has changed not just how to communicate and understand one other, but it has also created new opportunities for linguistic research and comprehension in a globalized world.

Yule (1996) stated that pragmatics involves exploring the connections between language structures and the individuals who employ these structures. When delving into language acquisition from a pragmatic perspective, individuals not only learn the grammatical and structural aspects of a language but also develop an understanding of how to effectively use language to convey their intended significances, articulate underlying assumptions, express objectives, and regulate conversational conduct. Pragmatics, in this context, refers to the study of language use in real-world situations, encompassing the social and cultural aspects of communication. This lens becomes particularly valuable in the digital landscape, where the trifecta of pragmatics, context, and emojis intertwine to shape the dynamics of online communication. Pragmatics, as a discipline, focuses on how language is used in context, considering factors such as the speaker's intentions, the social context, and the relationship between interlocutors.

Context plays a pivotal role in interpreting messages accurately, as the meaning of words and expressions can vary based on the surrounding circumstances. Miaschi stated that emojis as visual elements, contribute to this intricate interplay by adding an extra layer of expression to text-based communication (Miaschi, 2020). It serves as non-verbal cues that convey emotions and intentions, enriching the overall meaning of messages. The synergy of pragmatics, context, and emojis collectively enhances online communication by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the emotional nuances

embedded in digital interactions. This holistic approach considers not only the literal meaning of words but also the subtleties of expression, making online communication both richer and clearer for participants.

The necessity of context in comprehending the intended meanings of words and actions within specific contexts is fundamental to effective communication. Context operates as a conceptual framework, serving as a point of reference that facilitates the nuanced understanding of spoken meanings (Rahardi, 2020). This contextual backdrop is essential for individuals to decipher the intricate layers of communication, ensuring that the intended message is accurately interpreted. In the domain of cyberpragmatics, the relevance of context becomes even more pronounced, particularly in the analysis of emojis within messages. Visual cues, such as emojis, play a pivotal role in this digital realm, where it acts as non-verbal elements enriching the emotional and semantic dimensions of online interactions.

The study of emojis within the context of cyberpragmatics delves into the intricate ways in which these visual symbols contribute to conveying emotions and augmenting the overall meaning of digital communication. Based on Sperber and Wilson, as the digital landscape continues to evolve, the acknowledgment of context remains paramount, serving as a linchpin in the interpretation of words, actions, and the ever-expanding array of visual elements employed in contemporary communication. Without context, it might be difficult to understand what someone is saying, especially when some people like to insinuate meanings. Sperber & Wilson (1986, 1995) stated that how people interact on the internet, especially cognitive pragmatics, and more specifically, relevance theory is called cyberpragmatic. This approach helps explain both face-to-face and asynchronous online communication.

The dynamic focus of cyberpragmatics explores the complex dynamics of online communication between people, with a focus on sites such as Instagram. This field of study examined the various ways that language and communication function in the digital sphere, dissecting the intricacies of online discussions and figuring out how people express meaning in the virtual sphere. Cyberpragmatics is more than just a window into modern online interactions is a history of text-based

communication, highlighting the significant influence that the internet has had on the exchange of ideas and the building of relationships in the digital age.

Analyzing Instagram comments reveals a noteworthy aspect of cyberpragmatics, particularly highlighting the usage of emojis. In the context of this visually centric social media platform, Yus (2018) sheds light on the impact of emojis on the interpretation and emotional resonance of messages, underscoring the significance of this visual symbolism within the cyberpragmatic framework. Emoji placement and choice have a crucial role in how people perceive and comprehend online communication, which adds complexity and fascination to the larger study of cyberpragmatics in the dynamic field of digital discourse. (Yus, 2018). Emojis, through their use and placement, can significantly influence the perception and understanding of online communication especially on Instagram, making them a fascinating subject of study in the realm of cyberpragmatic.

The virtual external context, which complements the internal context, is usually divided into two categories: internal and conventional external contexts. They are labeled as "internal" and "conventional external" because they have yet to incorporate information technology, which is inherently virtual (R Rahardi, 2022). So, when discussing the impact of information technology, digital technology, and the internet, including recent advancements like the Internet of Things, the Web of Things, and cyber-physical systems, it is a logical outcome of the progression of virtual technologies, as mentioned earlier. Rahardi stated that the virtual external context is closely tied to the conventional external context, with the key difference lying in their individual aspects (Rahardi, 2022). As shift from traditional in-person communities to virtual ones, the characteristics of each element in the conventional external context change. The concepts of "speech community," "speech group," and "speech society" are associated with sociolinguistics in the interdisciplinary field of linguistics, while the concept of a "virtual community" emerged during the development of cyberpragmatics.

Emojis are widely used and have complex connotations; this is especially noticeable in the comments area of Instagram photos including beauty contests. Cyberpragmatic theory should be applied to this phenomenon to better understand

it. Emoji usage in digital discourse presents an intriguing field of research since it provides insights into how these visual symbols function as means of expressing emotions and deepening the layers of online interactions. Posts on beauty contests, which often double as debate points, show people using emojis to express their feelings, thoughts, and reactions.

The multiple functions of emojis present a unique challenge in digital communication due to their ability to convey nuanced emotions, contextual cues, and social signals that might be difficult to express through words alone. Emojis serve as visual aids that enhance the meaning of text, bridging gaps in tone and intent that often arise in written communication. For instance, a simple smiley face can transform a potentially ambiguous statement into a friendly or light-hearted comment, while a thumbs-up emoji can signify approval or agreement without the need for lengthy explanations.

Conversely, the same emojis can also be used sarcastically or ironically, complicating the interpretation for the receiver. This dual potential of emojis to convey both positive and negative sentiments underscores the complexity of their function. Positive emojis can reinforce supportive, enthusiastic, or affectionate messages, making interactions feel more personable and engaging. Negative emojis, on the other hand, can express dissatisfaction, sarcasm, or criticism, sometimes in a subtle manner that might not be immediately clear. The subjective nature of emoji interpretation, influenced by individual and cultural differences, further complicates their use, making it essential for communicators to be mindful of context and audience when incorporating emojis into their messages.

According to Yus (2014), a cyberpragmatic analysis of these emojis reveals the complex web of meanings and emotions included even in ostensibly straightforward emojis. This study emphasizes how context is crucial for understanding these digital sentiments and shows how emoji interpretation is intrinsically linked to the particular conversational environment. When used skillfully, emojis become a powerful weapon that can create unique digital expressions that have an impact on the dynamics of online communication. This research delves into the complex relationship between emojis and cyberpragmatics

in the context of Instagram beauty pageants, revealing the feelings, meanings, and communication dynamics that influence the digital world (Yus, 2014). Skillful use of emojis can create unique digital expressions and influence how people communicate online.

Some previous research is used in this study to show the gap between this present study and the previous ones. The first previous research is a journal entitled *Emoji: A Full Cyberpragmatic Approach* by (Yus, 2021). This research examined the use of emojis from a cyberpragmatic perspective. It emphasizes that emojis are not simply decoded, but also inferred, and that their meaning is not always clear and requires context for full understanding. The paper proposes a detailed classification of the functions of emojis when used in context. One of the key findings of the research is that emojis play multiple roles in communication. They can influence the interpretation of accompanying text, add visual imagery, aid in conversational management, express emotions, and strengthen or mitigate the illocutionary force of a speech act. In other words, emojis have the ability to qualify propositional attitudes, enhance the overall meaning of a message, and contribute to the effectiveness of communication.

Another study is by Li & Yang, (2018). The article discusses the pragmatic functions of emojis in internet-based communication. It explores how emojis are used in online conversations and categorizes them into seven functions: attitude or emotion signal, attitude or emotion intensity enhancer, illocutionary force modifier, humor, irony, turn-taking or giving, and backchannel device. The study analyzes the use of emojis in Wechat group conversations and identifies the most popular emojis used in these groups. The study concludes that emojis are highly functional and efficient in online communication, serving as emotion signifiers and interaction devices.

Another study is by Rahardi (2022). The article focuses on the pragmatic meaning of smiley emojis in cyberpragmatics, specifically in online communication on the social media platform WhatsApp. They analyzed the data using the extralingual equivalent analysis method to identify the various intentions conveyed by smiley emojis, such as satisfaction, teasing, excitement, worry, gratitude, and

enthusiasm. This research contributes to the development of cyberpragmatics by providing insights into the use of emojis in virtual contexts. It highlights the role of emojis in conveying emojis and intentions in online communication.

Then, research by Faris (2021) focuses on the use of emojis in an Indonesian Intergenerational family WhatsApp group. It examined the types and functions of emojis used by both men and women in the group, as well as the factors that influence emoji use. These emojis served various functions, including attitude/emotion enhancement, attitude/emotion signaling, backchanneling, humor, and illocutionary force. The research also highlights that age alone does not determine emoji use, as other factors such as power relations, family relations, and occupation also play a role. The findings contribute to the understanding of emoji use in Indonesian contexts and provide insights into communication strategies for groups with members of different ages and genders.

Another study is by Bai (2019). The article is a systematic review that examined the current research on emoji. It covers various aspects of emoji, including their development, usage, function, and application. The review summarizes the main research fields, topics, conclusions, and methods used in emoji research. It highlights that emoji are widely used in computer-mediated communication and have unique semantic and emotional features. The review suggests future research directions for emoji, including understanding the relationship between emoji and real sentiments, exploring factors influencing user preferences in emoji use, and investigating the impact of stickers on emoji.

This research built upon prior studies on emoji analysis in the context of Miss International's Instagram comments that contain emoji. Rather than simply examining the use of emoji, the study explored various aspects, including the types of emojis used, the purposes they served, and the role of context. This research provided a more comprehensive understanding of analyzing comments that contain emojis on Miss International by considering different emoji types, their functions, and the context of Miss International's Instagram posts. It should be noted that this research is slightly different from previous emoji analysis research because what is analyzed not only includes comments containing emoji from virtual communication

but also analyzing the meaning of the text in comments that contain emoji on beauty contest.

1.2 Research Problems

Many issues that need further investigation arise from the problem's background explanation. However, the problems to be studied are limited, keeping in mind the research's limitations. Based on the background of the research, the problem is why emoji can have multiple functions, intent that might be difficult to express through words alone and also can be differ between positive, and negative. The researcher has formulated the following research questions to discover more about cyberpragmatic, as follows:

- a. What meanings are conveyed by emojis within the context of Miss International Instagram comments. And which emoji is the most frequently used?
- b. How does the use of emojis differ between positive and negative in Miss International Instagram comments?

1.3 Research Objective

Emoji become an important piece of virtual communication in conveying emotions and adding depth to text-based message. Then based on the problem above, the researcher decided that the objectives of this research are as follows:

- a. To identify the meaning of emojis convey within the context, and what are most frequently use emojis in Miss International Instagram comments.
- b. To explore the emojis differ between positive and negative emoji use on Miss International Instagram comments.

1.4 Research Significance

This research can be useful for those to study the use of language and how meaning is being delivered. This research can also be used to enrich the knowledge of pragmatics, specifically on cyberpragmatic. This research is to become an empirical source for those who are interested in studying pragmatic specifically in

cyberpragmatic. This research can be used by English literature students as a reference in understanding pragmatics especially in understanding the theory of cyberpragmatic. This research can be useful for them which may inspire them in analyzing phenomenon using the same theory but with different point of view. And also for future researchers, this research can be used as an example on how to analyze a phenomenon using the theory of cyberpragmatic. Future researchers are also to be capable in finding the gaps in this research so then they could do better in the upcoming study.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To formulate and explain the terms of the title to avoid ambiguity in this research. The definition is as below:

- a. Cyberpragmatics is the study of how language and communication norms are adapted and applied in digital or online environments, encompassing the analysis of digital discourse, emoji, emojis, and the unique features of virtual communication.
- b. Emoji is a representation of a facial expression or emotion made out of a collection of characters, usually letters and punctuation. Emoji are graphical representations of emotions or moods that are utilized in writing. They help text-based communications acquire emotional nuance and significance. Emoji are widely used to convey emotions that would be challenging to express in plain text in text messages, emails, online chat, and social media posts.
- c. Context refers to the broader set of circumstances, factors, and conditions that surround and influence the communication that occurs in online or digital environments. Context plays a crucial role in shaping the meaning of messages and understanding the nuances of online interactions.
- d. Virtual external context refers to the external factors, conditions, and influences that impact digital or virtual environments, including online communication mediums and their surrounding elements.