
**THE MEANING OF EMOJI IN TIKTOK COMMENTS ON NIKITA
MIRZANI MAWARDI ACCOUNT**

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Abstract:

This study examines the types and functions of emojis in comments on Nikita Mirzani Mawardi's TikTok account. The main focus of the study is to understand how emojis help create atmosphere, convey intent, and enhance social interaction on the TikTok platform. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach by observing popular videos and collecting data from comments containing emojis. The data were collected manually by observing and screenshotting comments that contained emojis from Nikita Mirzani's TikTok posts. The selected comments came from videos uploaded between March and May 2024, focusing on those with high engagement and diverse audience reactions. Only comments that included at least one emoji were included in the corpus, while purely textual comments were excluded. The analysis was carried out through data reduction, categorization, and the application of Ferdinand de Saussure and Marcel Danesi's semiotic theory to identification type and function of emojis. The results show that emojis are used to express emotions, provide context, and reinforce communication messages. The use of emojis is greatly influenced by the social and cultural context of users in Indonesia, thus playing an important role in shaping meaning and enhancing interaction on social media. These findings confirm that emojis are an effective and meaningful communication tool in the digital age, as well as a reflection of the dynamics of visual language and online culture today

Keywords: emoji, semiotics, TikTok, digital discourse, meaning

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of digital communication has introduced new ways of expressing emotions and meaning beyond traditional linguistic symbols. One of the most pervasive features of online discourse is the emoji, a multimodal sign system that combines image and emotion to enrich textual interaction. Emojis are widely used across social media platforms, including TikTok, where they play a crucial role in shaping the tone and interpretation of comments.

As a well-known Indonesian celebrity, Nikita Mirzani attracts significant attention and engagement on her TikTok account. Her videos consistently generate active interactions from followers and viewers, reflecting broader trends in Indonesia's social media culture where celebrity presence shapes online discourse and audience participation. TikTok, as a highly visual and emotionally driven platform, has become a key space for public expression, identity performance, and audience connection. Within these interactions, emojis are not merely decorative but function as meaningful semiotic resources. They convey affective nuances, reinforce or modify verbal messages, and reflect larger issues of digital communication, emotional expression, and cultural interpretation in online spaces.

Semiotically, emojis function as signs that represent ideas, emotions, or social attitudes. According to Peirce (1931), signs can be categorized into icons, indexes, and symbols. Emojis, depending on their use, may function iconically (resembling emotions or actions), indexically (pointing to a situation), or symbolically (conventionalized cultural meanings). Prior studies (Danesi, 2017; Dresner & Herring, 2010) emphasize that emojis help users manage affect and relational stance in online communication. However, in celebrity centered discourse, emojis often take on amplified roles, acting as tools of collective evaluation and identity alignment.

Despite their ubiquity, the meanings of emojis are highly context-dependent. A laughing emoji (😂), for example, may express amusement, mockery, or even ridicule depending on surrounding text and interactional intent. Similarly, an angry emoji (😡) may signal genuine anger or playful exaggeration. Thus, analyzing emoji use in Nikita Mirzani's TikTok comments provides valuable insights into how digital communities negotiate stance and criticism.

Previous studies that have also analyzed the semiotic study of emoji symbols in social media communication include the work of (Nurafni & Firmonasari, 2022) which investigated the meaning of emojis in WhatsApp group chats and which emojis were most frequently used. Additionally, (Asnidar, 2019) also discussed the semiotics of emoji symbols on social media, particularly Facebook. Asnidar analyzed emoji symbols in the status and comment sections of Facebook posts by Indonesian Language Education students. Furthermore, there are still few studies that examine how emojis are creatively used on TikTok, such as to form a "secret" language or create trends.

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the types and functions of emojis used. The difference between this study and the two previous studies cited by the author is that this study has a specific context, namely on the social media platform TikTok. Many studies have discussed emojis in digital communication, but most still focus on platforms such as Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, or Instagram.

This study therefore aims to (1) identify the types of emojis used in the comments of Nikita Mirzani's TikTok account, and (2) analyze their meanings within the framework of Peircean semiotics.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative descriptive method, focusing on the interpretation of emojis as signs in online discourse. The data were collected from the TikTok account of Nikita Mirzani Mawardi, a well-known Indonesian celebrity. A total of fifty comments containing emojis were purposively selected from posts uploaded between March and May 2024. These posts were chosen because they generated high engagement and represented diverse audience reactions. The data were obtained through documentation and screenshotting of the comments, with only those containing emojis included, while purely textual comments were excluded. The analysis applied Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic model, which conceptualizes a sign as the combination of a *signifier* (the form or visual representation of the emoji) and a *signified* (the concept or meaning it conveys). Each emoji was examined in terms of how its visual form relates to the meaning constructed within the textual co-occurrence and discourse context, revealing how users produce and interpret meaning through multimodal expressions in digital communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Danesi, (2017), emoji are symbols that have unique semiotic properties because they can contain both denotative and connotative meanings simultaneously and dynamically, depending on the context in which they are used. Danesi emphasizes that emoji are not merely images or icons, but rather a sign system that combines visual and cultural aspects to convey messages quickly and efficiently. In this study, a total of 52 research data in the form of comments were identified. However, some research data used more than one different emoji, so a total of 57 different emojis were identified and analyzed. The following table shows the use of emojis in the comments section of Nikita Mirzani Mawardi's TikTok account, with the aim of identifying the types of emojis used and which ones are more dominant.

No	Types of Emoji	Quantity	Frequency
1	Facial Emoji	20	35,09%
2	Kinesic Emoji	13	22,81%
3	Symbol Object Emoji	15	26,32%
4	Ideographic Emoji	9	15,79%
Total		57	100%

1. Facial Emoji



Data 1

The comment data above is the first data. The comment was written on April 25, 2025. In the comment, the account owner juju's mom used the emoji , which, according to Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), this emoji serves as a signifier which is a face with a hand on the chin, while the signified is the concept of thinking. However, in the context of the sentence “itu tidak ada pemandunya kah?” the signified shifts to confusion or doubt. This finding is consistent with

(Hermanto, 2019) research results, which show that the meaning of emojis is highly contextual and can vary depending on the conversation.

According to Danesi's classification (2017), the emoji belongs to the facial emoji category because it displays facial expressions. He also said that the emoji (thinking face) is a micro-expression of the face that is considered in some cultures as a sign of deep consideration, confusion, and anticipation of an answer.

2. Kinesic Emoji



Data 2

The comment data above is the 22nd entry. The account owner, Rani Damanik, posted this comment on November 13, 2024. The comment reads, “dari 1000 postingan NM ini paling KEREN” accompanied by the emoji “.” According to Saussure (1916), the signifier is the emoji , which is a symbol of a hand with the index and little fingers raised (the “rock on” or “sign of the horns” gesture). The signified is the concept of “cool,” “spirit,” or “positive energy,” often associated with rock music, expressions of support, or appreciation. This emoji reinforces appreciation while showcasing the distinctive expression style of the young digital community. This finding is consistent with the research results of (Prada et al., 2018) , which found that emojis serve to reinforce emotions and provide additional expressions that cannot be represented by text alone. In this case, emphasizes the appreciation of “KEREN.”

According to Danesi (2017), the emoji is classified as a kinesic emoji because it depicts a human hand gesture. The emoji conveys expressive nuances that cannot be captured by text alone. These emojis reinforce appreciation while showcasing the unique style of expression characteristic of the young digital community.

3. Symbol Object Emoji



Data 3

According to Saussure (1916), the signifier is the emoji , which depicts a graph with an upward trend. The signified of this emoji is the concept of “growth,” “increase,” or “positive trend.” In the context of this comment, the emoji signifies the view that the phenomenon or trend of “mardua holong” is on the rise. This is conveyed through a short text with the addition of a symbolic emoji to reinforce the meaning. This finding is consistent with the results of Prada et al

(2018) research, which explains that emojis are used to emphasize the meaning of text messages and replace nonverbal aspects in digital communication.

According to Danesi (2017), these emoji depicts a line graph with an upward trend, which visually symbolizes growth, progress, or improvement. This emoji as a visual methapor that represents positive development or success in various contexts, such as finance, performance, or popularity.

4. Ideographic Emoji



Data 4

The data above is taken from data 33. The account owner named “carlin” wrote this comment on November 13, 2024, to express intense emotional admiration using the emoji 🤎.

According to Saussure (1916), the emoji 🤎 is a signifier, which is an image of a flaming heart. The signified of this emoji is love, passion, or admiration filled with enthusiasm. Its metaphorical meaning: something truly captivating and heart-stirring. In the sentence “cuaks keren banget 🤎,” the 🤎 emoji reinforces the meaning of praise by emphasizing the writer’s admiration and enthusiasm for something considered very cool.

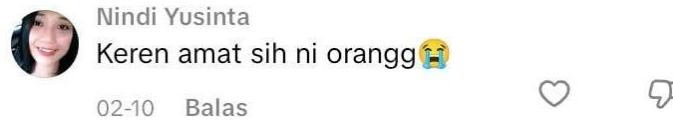
According to Danesi (2017), the 🤎 emoji falls into the category of ideographic emojis because it has an abstract concept. The abstract meaning conveyed is which is intense emotional admiration, burning love or passion, or something that truly captivates the heart. This finding is consistent with Alshenqeeti (2016) research, which emphasizes that emojis replace nonverbal expressions in digital communication, thereby reinforcing emotional messages.

Function Of Emoji

No	Emoji Function	Quantity	Frequency
1	Emotive function	40	76,92%
2	Conative function	3	5,77%
3	Referential function	6	11,54%
4	Poetic function	1	1,92%
5	Phatic function	2	3,85%
6	Metalingual function	0	0,00%

Total	52	100%
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1. Emotive Function



Data 1

The data above is taken from the third data set. Account user Nindi Yusinta posted the comment on February 10, 2025, which contained public appreciation in the form of praise, accompanied by the emoji . According to Saussure (1916), the emoji is a signifier, which is the visual form of a crying face emoji. The signified, however, is not the literal meaning of sadness, but rather a hyperbolic expression of profound admiration.

According to Jakobson (1960), the emoji falls under the emotive function, which emphasizes the speaker's personal feelings (Nindi Yusinta). This emotive function aims to convey the psychological state of the message sender, which ranges from admiration to feeling “moved” or “overwhelmed with emotion.” Thus, emojis function as a tool for self-expression that reinforces emotions, not merely as decorative additions. This finding is consistent with the research by (Pavalanathan & Eisenstein, 2016), who support this by stating that emojis function as emotive devices that strengthen the communicator's intent and feelings.

2. Conative function

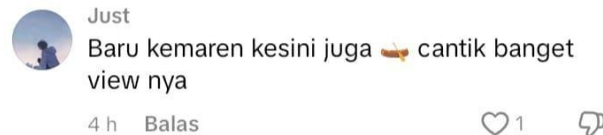


Data 2

The data above is taken from the 28th data. The owner of the account Sky [Kena SB] wrote the comment on April 26, 2025, addressing a public figure or content creator (Nikita Mirzani) with a recommendation to visit Lake Toba at sunset, using the emoji . According to Saussure (1916), the signifier is the visual form of a hand pointing forward, which is the signified a direct invitation to the person being addressed (Nikita Mirzani), with the emoji focusing the invitation on the addressee, as if pointing directly at them. The emoji emphasizes that this invitation is directed personally, not generally.

According to Jakobson (1960), the emoji has a dominant conative function, because its nature is to instruct or directly invite the interlocutor. The phrase “Cobain ... kak” is already an invitation, and the emoji confirms who the target of the invitation is, namely the recipient of the message. In line with Baktiar et al. (2022), the emoji emphasizes to whom the message is addressed, thus its function is conative. The conative function is characteristic of kinesic emojis, emojis that emulate human body movements or nonverbal expressions, such as hand gestures and body language.

3. Referential function



Data 3

The data was taken from the 25th data point. The account owner simply shared their travel experience and impressions of the scenery using the emoji. According to Saussure (1916), this emoji is a signifier, which is the visual form of a boat. Meanwhile, the signified is sharing the experience of water activities or nature tourism using a boat, thus reinforcing the context that the place is a lake/water destination.

According to Jakobson (1960), this emoji has a referential function. The referential function in this study was found to use symbol object emojis, namely emojis that represent real objects or specific symbols in the context of communication. The referential function can be seen in symbol object emojis such as 🚤, where the emoji provides additional specific and contextual information about the situation or setting being discussed, namely the experience of visiting a place with beautiful scenery and possibly boating activities.

4. Poetic function



Data 4

The data above is taken from the 21st data. Jelly's account wrote a comment praising Kak Niki, likening her to the beautiful sunset over Lake Toba, using the emoji 🌅. According to

Saussure (1916), the signifier of this data is the emoji , which is a visual representation of the sunset in the afternoon. The signified is the meaning constructed, which is beauty, light, and warmth associated with Kak Niki, likened to a beautiful sunset on Lake Toba.

According to Jakobson (1960), this emoji has a poetic function. The (sunset) emoji is used to reinforce and embellish the metaphorical expression “bersinar seperti mentari sore” which highlights the beauty and aesthetic atmosphere of the sentence. The poetic function in this study was found to use symbol object emojis, which are emojis that represent real objects or symbols that have conceptual and aesthetic meanings. These emojis help create a poetic effect by highlighting the aspects of beauty and emotion in communication.

5. Phatic function



Data 5

The data above is the second piece of data. The account LilyJull1607 wrote a comment greeting Niki (the subject of the comment), saying hello and expressing appreciation (a friendly greeting and social reinforcement) using the emoji . According to Saussure (1916), the signifier is the emoji , which depicts a waving hand. Meanwhile, the signified is a warm greeting and salutation to Niki. The combination of text and emojis creates a more lively impression, not just a greeting but also a social expression that strengthens relationships.

According to Jakobson (1960), this emoji has a phatic function, because it serves to initiate, maintain, or strengthen social contact. The greeting “Hello” accompanied by a waving hand emoji shows an effort to maintain friendly and attentive interactions. The phatic function in this study was found to use kinesic emojis, which are emojis that mimic human body movements or nonverbal expressions, such as waving hands. The phatic function can be seen in kinesic emojis such as , where the emoji acts as a tool to open communication channels and maintain social relationships between the sender and recipient of a message.

The findings of this research demonstrate that emojis in TikTok comments on Nikita Mirzani Mawardi’s account are not merely decorative visual elements but semiotic resources that construct meaning in diverse ways. Based on Peirce’s semiotic framework, emojis were classified into four main types: facial, kinesic, symbol object, and ideographic. Among these, facial emojis were the most frequently used, highlighting the importance of emotional expression in digital interaction. This aligns with Danesi’s (2017) claim that emojis serve as affective markers, enabling users to express nuanced feelings in ways that text alone cannot achieve.

For example, the emoji in Data 1 reveals that even a simple symbol of “thinking” can shift its meaning depending on co-text, functioning as a marker of confusion or doubt. Similarly, kinesic emojis such as in Data 2 illustrate how users employ gestures digitally

to reinforce enthusiasm and solidarity. These findings suggest that emojis bridge verbal and non-verbal communication, creating hybrid forms of discourse that simulate face-to-face interaction.

The analysis of emoji functions using Jakobson's (1960) framework further revealed that the emotive function was the most dominant. This indicates that users primarily rely on emojis to communicate their personal attitudes, feelings, and evaluations toward Nikita Mirzani. The emoji in Data 1, for instance, demonstrates exaggerated admiration rather than sadness, showing how emojis may undergo functional shifts in context. Other functions, such as conative (), referential (), poetic (), and phatic (), also appeared, though less frequently. These functions emphasize that emojis are multifunctional tools, used not only to express emotions but also to direct attention, share experiences, construct aesthetics, and maintain social bonds.

These results support prior studies (Dresner & Herring, 2010; Prada et al., 2018) that argue emojis enrich online interaction by filling gaps in nonverbal cues. However, in the case of celebrity discourse, emojis play additional roles in shaping public image and group identity. Supporters use emojis to express admiration and solidarity, while critics employ them for irony or ridicule. Thus, emoji use becomes part of the larger discourse of evaluation, identity performance, and social alignment in online communities.

In short, the discussion highlights that emoji meanings are context-dependent, dynamic, and deeply tied to the relational and evaluative practices of users. Their pragmatic flexibility makes them powerful tools in digital discourse, especially in highly interactive and emotionally charged spaces like TikTok celebrity accounts.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that emojis in TikTok comments on Nikita Mirzani Mawardi's account serve as complex semiotic signs that perform multiple communicative functions. Four types of emojis were identified—facial, kinesic, symbol object, and ideographic—with facial emojis appearing as the most dominant. Functionally, emojis were found to operate mainly within the emotive function, but also within conative, referential, poetic, and phatic functions, each contributing to the richness of digital interaction.

The analysis demonstrated that emojis such as , , , , and not only express emotions but also convey evaluations, invitations, experiences, metaphors, and greetings. Their meanings often shift depending on co-text and discourse context, showing that emojis are dynamic and context-sensitive signs. In celebrity-centered discourse, emojis play a dual role: as expressive tools of admiration and solidarity, and as pragmatic strategies for critique or irony.

Theoretically, this research contributes to semiotic and pragmatic studies by applying Peirce's triadic model and Jakobson's functional framework to digital discourse. Practically, it sheds light on how Indonesian netizens creatively use emojis to negotiate stance, identity, and social interaction on TikTok. The findings highlight that emojis are not superficial additions but integral elements of meaning-making in online communication.

Future research may extend this study by exploring cross-platform comparisons (e.g., Instagram, Twitter) or investigating how different cultural backgrounds influence emoji interpretation. Such studies could broaden the understanding of emojis as evolving semiotic resources in global digital communication.

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manifested in the form of a previous literature review (state of the art) followed by a statement of the scientific novelty of the article.

Citations should be written using a bodynote format such as (Uwuigbe & Ajibolade, 2013), (Wang, 2016), (Muttakin et al., 2015) and relevant to the bibliography/bibliography (recommended using the Mendeley Application).

METHODOLOGY [500-1000 words]

For quantitative study: Including Population and sample [population selection criteria and sampling method] material/test with description, variables, nature of data, data collection technique, data analysis method. Discuss the software, hardware used during the research with their brand names. This section should be easy enough for any reader to repeat the study under the same conditions. For qualitative studies: Includes methodological orientation [grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis] Sampling [number of participants, Method of approach, where data are collected] Data collection [interviews, audiovisual, field notes] and data analysis [number of data coders, software, etc]

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION [500 to 1000 words] (Presenting data, facts-what you find, calculate, find, observe) FINDINGS Sub Topics 1 Sub Topics 2 Sub Topics 3

The caption for the table should be above the table. Table 1:

Table 1: Legend /name

Intersection	Vehicular	Pedestrian	Cycle	Average	Average	Number of traffic signal cycles.
	Volume (PCU/hr)	Volume	time range (sec)	Vehicular delay (sec)	Pedestrian Delay (sec)	
Traffic Characteristics of Study Intersection _ Peak Hour Data						
Pattom Intersection	6,134	844	120	51	20	30
Rambagh Intersection	5,686	1432	115 - 180	83	19	26
Traffic Characteristics of Study Intersection _ Four-hour Data						
Pattom Intersection	20,734	3,200	120	49	18	109
Rambagh Intersection	27,849	4,715	115 - 185	90	18	94

Source: tabel source.

[Different tables and figures cannot be used in parallel in the MS word page, they must be sequential with proper table/figure names and numbers]

DISCUSSION Discussion 1 Discussion 2 Discussion 3

Provide a logical, and scientific analysis of the findings of this study. Present evidence to support your analysis by citing the work of previous researchers or existing theories. [How do your results agree to disagree with previous studies, and why]. 5 to 10 citations can be provided to support the argument.

CONCLUSION

Conclusions should be written in very clear words. It should explain how the reasearch objectives were achieved.

REFERENCE

1. Minimum 15 good quality references required with DOI cross ref. Websites, newspaper references, should be limited to no more than 2.
2. All references must conform to the 7th edition APA style and appear in the main body of the article. Do not put additional unquoted references.

Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last names of the first author of each work.

- *Offline Journal article*
Harris, M., Karper, E., Stacks, G., Hoffman, D., DeNiro, R., Cruz, P., et al. (2001). Writing labs and the Hollywood connection. *Journal of Film Writing*, 44(3), 213–245.
- *Article by DOI*

Gelkopf, M., Ryan, P., Cotton, S., & Berger, R. (2008). The impact of “training the trainers” for helping tsunami-survivor children on Sri Lankan disaster volunteer workers. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 15(2), 117-135. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1072-5245.15.2.117>

- *Book*

Calfee, R. C., & Valencia, R. R. (1991). *APA guide to preparing manuscripts for journal publication*. American Psychological Association.

- *eBooks*

Forsyth, D. (2018). *Probability and statistics for computer science*. Springer Publishing Company. <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319644097>

- *Websites*

Lawson, J. F. (2019). *The impacts of plastic on Indonesian migratory birds*. Department of Conservation. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/reports/birds/indonesiaplastic/>

- *Organization Reports*

Ministry of Education. (2009). *Research ethics in New Zealand: A student guide*.

* Journal names and book titles should be italicized.