Emoticon and Sticker Interference Expressed in WhatsApp Group Interaction

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Abstract: *This study focuses on analyzing phenomena of emoticon and sticker existing to represent the facial expression which must be involved in face to face communication in order to succeed the message convey. This study is supposed to be able to know deeply how the analysis of emoticon and sticker used in messaging via WhatsApp is. The method applied in this study was qualitative research design. The data were acquired from the text of "put respek on G's" WhatsApp group and "e-house toefl discussion". The research finding is about the existence of implicit meaning tried to transfer by the users, however the implicit meaning is well-understood in order the receivers understand well about the meaning of the communication. All of the samples are able to reveal the implicit meaning involved in emoticon and sticker in WhatsApp text, therefore, it minimizes the misunderstanding of a communication. The data showed that the gender of emoticon and sticker users is both masculine and feminine. The emoticon and sticker use is also able to enrich the language features. Moreover, the option of the emoticon and sticker is in big number so that it can facilitate the users to choose which emoticon and sticker they want to use.*

Keywords: *emoticon, sticker, interference, WhatsApp, interaction*

I. INTRODUCTION

Human life is inextricably linked to social relationships. Communication is needed to maintain a social relationship (Thao and Herman, 2020:23). Fundamentally, a person, social creature needs to own direct or face to face meeting to succeed the purpose of communication by reading the partners' emotion by taking a look at their faces. Nowadays, people most of the time do interaction via social media. It elaborates that they have a limit to read the partners' emotion (Chairunnisa and Benedictus, 2017). WhatsApp is mentioned as a popular chatting apllication used in all over the countries (Wolny, 2016). It supplies an advanced feature called as emoticon which allows the users to represent their feelings by that facility.

The inspiration of this research is from the high intensity of emoticon and sticker use or in another words, most WhatsApp group users utilize this emoticon and sticker facility (Subramanian et al, 2019). However, it is greatly possible for the users in having confusions about the real meaning and the use of emoticon and sticker. The points which are conveyed by the first utterer will be unwell-transferred. The point is incompletely sent or it is only in some parts of the real utterance meant to be (Tang and Hew, 2019). For instance, if the sender who tries to make a joke by not using the emoticon and sticker, it will make the receiver get the misunderstanding. Moreover, if the users do not understand about which emoticon and sticker

they use, it can cause the misunderstanding as well. However, both speakers must reveal the implicit meaning of the emoticon and sticker use in order to succeed the point transfer process, language identity and gender to know deeply the fundamental meaning inside that sticker. It is affected by all limitations which exist in virtual communication (Li, 2018). On the other hand, the face to face communication process is greatly easier to read all the signal when the process is occurring (Miller et al, 2017).

Elaborating the interference of implicit meaning, language identity and gender in emoticon and sticker expressed in WhatsApp group interaction will be described and strengthened by the theory of Van Dijk about implicit meaning as the main theory (Lu et al, 2016). The theory of Mills (2005) about language identity and gender will be used for strengthening the previous mentioned theory (Miller et al, 2016). This research is intended to elucidate the interpretation of emoticon and sticker in WhatsApp group interaction by strengthening with the implicit meaning of Van Dijk and language identity theory of Mills (Al Halah et al, 2019). This emoticon and sticker research is supposed to continue investigating in this deal, emoticon and sticker use in WhatsApp group interaction.

The emoticon and sticker which are used by the senders will be analysed by using implicit meaning, gender and language identity with a certain intention. It is used to acquire the broad and deep analysis. The data are acquired from comparing some WhatsApp groups which are uttered in English and it is intentionally used to enrich the language features which will exist. Moreover, those aspects must be solved by critical discourse analysis (Shoeb et al, 2019). It is because critical discourse analysis is used to reveal the critical or deep analysis in a certain discourse in detail. Therefore, they have a strong correlation one each other.

That strong correlation will help the writer to deal with it. The implicit meaning is popularly proposed by Van Dijk which focuses on the way to acquire the real meaning or interpretation of a word and a sentence (Preisendorfer et al, 2018). Not only does implicit meaning deal with it, but it deals also with the gender and language identity. Moreover, those will be the goal of this study. This study can contribute to practices of emoticon and sticker interference in dialoguing via whatsapp chat.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Emoticon and Sticker in WhatsApp

Emoticon deals with the medium for people to easily transmit the message conveyed in communicating. People have been using this kind of medium in communicating by having drawing or depicting in wall-cave. Uncertain thing goes to the ambiguity between people used to utilize picture to draw their emotions when they are communicating or even the real face expression first (Haji and Bakir, 2019)

Emoticon is able to provide the users in using it as the representative of real facial expression by the emoticon and sticker. Moreover, the various emoticon and sticker's shape which is provided can make the users pick the suitable emoticon and sticker with their emotion or feeling, such as happy, sad, amazed etc. (Schnoebelen, 2012).

The concept which is provided by emoticon and sticker in WhatsApp not only a facial emotion but also a broader theme, such as: vehicles, food and beverages, building, clothes

(Persson, 2019). The use of emoticon and sticker is not only to beautify the text chat but also to state their feeling or emotion which can represent the verbal communication. On other words, it is like a communication which is occurring and having the idea beyond the back of it (Alshenqeeti, 2016).

From the statements, it can be concluded that emoticon and sticker is like a colorful symbol in broader concept or theme which can delegate the verbal communication and text communication as well. Therefore, a communication here can mean something which has a deeper idea or thought. The emoticon and sticker is more simple and easier instead of typing all of the words which want to be expressed by the senders.

B. Implicit meaning, language gender and identity

Van Dijk (1977) stated that analyzing a text in discourse analysis only in the surface is not adequate. A text can be observed from many aspects or viewpoints. In this deal a text is not only group of words but it also can be in form of image or another discourse which can transfer the meaning for communication and emoticon is one of those discourses. On the other words, if a text can be formed as a part which can deliver a meaning, it must have some deeper parts. In this deal, social communication, Van Dijk grouped it by stating that there is a connection between social structure and social cognition. It tells about hoe the social structure can shape the way social cognition can go. It all deals with the implicit thing on it which can be known by the observation only.

It is a certain thing that emoticon is a media to deliver the meaning when the conversation process occurs. As the data show that they can communicate by using that emoticon only by not using or neglecting text. However, it can be well-conducted if they can elaborate the context by revealing the implicit meaning of the emoticon use. (see fig.2). in another case, an emoticon use even can change the real meaning of a chat conversation or emoticon can change the meaning of the previous text or even the topic discussion if the readers or receivers truly can read the implicit meaning of that emoticon (see fig. 4). The unwell-understanding from the emoticon readers or users also can provide greatly different interpretation form the meaning meant to be. The emoticon users ought to reveal the implicit meaning by reading and predicting it from the previous context.

According to media richness theory, there are four factors that determine good delivery of message: Ability of communication channel in conveying message signals such as facial expression, body movement, and vocal inflection; Feedbacks are directly given by the message receiver as response to every chats, Variety of language such as the presence of symbols and foreign language, and Ability of communication channel in conveying personality such as showing personal emotion (Chairunnisa and Benedictus, 2017).

Emojis have become an essential part of the modern digital communication strategy, enriching the textual message, and making the senders seem friendly and more care to his or her environment (Wagner et al, 2020). According to Prada et. al (2018) Conveying expressions with emoticons can create a positive mood, help convey messages effectively and the use of emoticons can reduce ambiguity so that the recipient can understand the meaning of the emoticon from the written context, so that it can clarify the message. Also Shoeb and de Melo (2021) stated that Emoticons have become a familiar part and are often used in this modern era

for texts between individuals or groups on social media. It shows that the use of emoticons are important in the conversion so it makes the topic is interesting.

Mills (2005) argued that a femininity can draw a more polite text in stereotype instead of a masculinity which will straight to the point and will sound ruder or impolitely. Dealing with the senders and receivers of a text as a communication tool means that it deals with the gender of the senders and receivers as well. It is because it will influence a lot the way they reveal their style in having a text chat.

The gender is not the only aspect, but it includes language identity as well of a senders and receivers. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) argued that the way language influences the processes of social change deals with examining the roles that language can play in social relation of a power and ideology. Therefore, the ideology of senders and receivers of a text communication can be considered as an important part as well. The background of senders and receivers such as social and job position can make a situation much different. Moreover, it can relate with the educational background of them as well.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used a descriptive methodology in conversation analysis. This research used media which had a deep message to convey because every single letter of a text which had a meaning can be analyzed deeply (Daft, 1984; Butarbutar et al, 2020).

The data source used in this study was the sticker emoticons applied in the WhatsApp. This data were taken from the Group chatting called "Put Respek On G's Name and E-House TOEFL Discussion" in WhatsApp. Two groups were intentionally taken to provide a comparison between casual group and more academic group. These groups were chosen as a source of data because all the members of this group are doing conversation with English language. Besides, all the members in this group expressed their feelings or emotion using sticker emoticon as a media communication. Sticker emoticons in WhatsApp were chosen as the data source in this study because they were related to their verbal and visual signs that support this study. Sticker emoticons in social media chatting can avoid the misunderstanding of the real message itself.

The first step which was taken is collecting the data by taking the screenshot of selected WhatsApp group. After collecting the data, they were analyzed by the theory of Van dijk about implicit meaning and the theory of Mills (2005) about language identity and gender. The data are analyzed from the context of conversation in order to get the proper analysis. The frequency of the use of emoticon and sticker was also provided in pie chart. Every emoticon and sticker was correlated from the context and the focus or scope in this research, such as: the implicit meaning in that emoticon and sticker, language identity to enrich the language feature analysis, and the gender of the emoticon and sticker users.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings
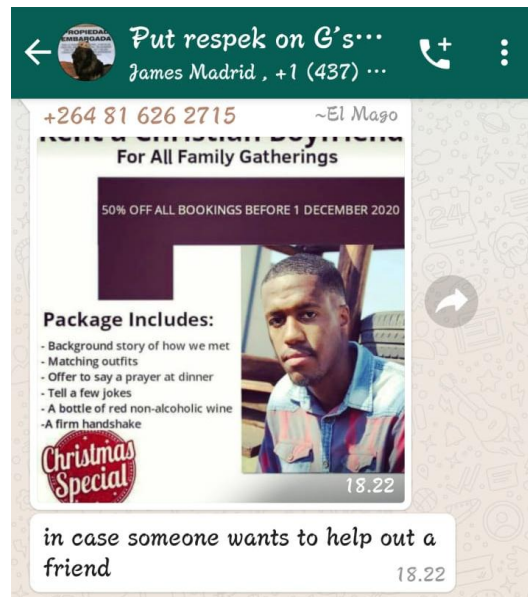
Image 1. The Using of Emoticon and Sticker in WAP

James use more than one emoticon, such as: ROTFL (Rolling On The Floor Laughing): The emoticon here is in the form of round face in yellow colored in which the eyes are closed with laughing on the floor. It means that he laughing a lot about picture above, feeling loved: The emoticon here is in the form of round face in yellow colored in which the eyes are closed with sweet smile and there are 3 loves around, and hug: The emoticon here is in the form of round face in yellow colored in which the eyes are closed with sweet smile and hands out.

In the data show, it can be seen if the emoticon which is used is kind of facial expression. It reflects that the users use the positive face expression to delegate his or her real face expression then, and it can have a purpose to reply the text of (+264 81 626 2715). It is shown that he is laughing out loud then, and it is supported by his sentences as his clarification in using that kind of laughing emoticon. By reading the and analyzing the sentences it can be seen if the man-picture which is appeared in the flyer which is sent to attract the attention of another members in that group is picture of him. From the laugh emoticon, it can be taken a conclusion if the picture is made for joke purpose and it will go in another readers as well.
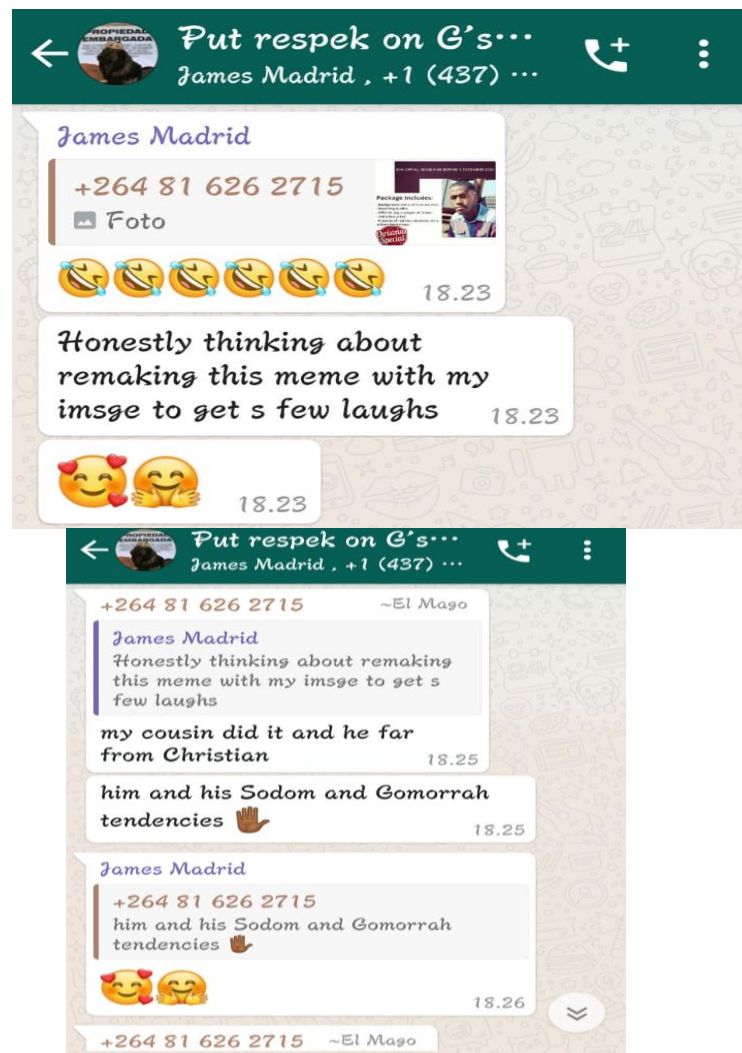
Image 2. The Using of Emoticon and Sticker in WAP

Although the sender is a man, from gender perspective he has a bit feminine side. Feeling loved emoticon is expression that mostly women used, and man rarely express their feeling use that kind of emoticon especially while chatting with strangers in that kind of group. He choses that emoticon because he feels happy when the sender sends that kind of meme, it can be a mood booster for him.

Smile with hug is emoticon that he used because he feels thankful about his happines, about joke that he understands from the picture, and maybe the hug can be led for the sender. Because of that meme, his day becomes brighter than before. Both of emoji that are shown in fig. 2 is positive response and it can strenghten the positive text message.
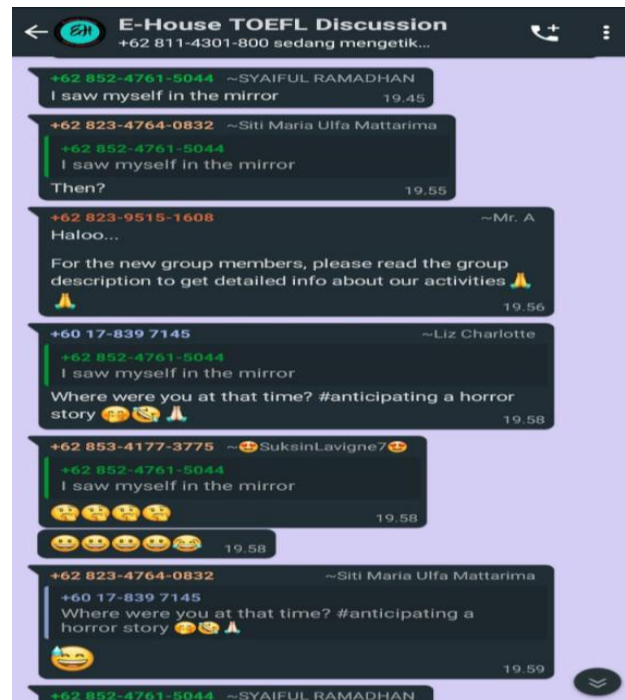
Image 3. The Using of Emoticon and Sticker in WAP

El Mago replies on James text that he teasing about his cousin who far from Christian and his cousin is tendency with Sodom and Gomorrah that similar with James. El Mago also adding stop sign with his hand that indicates he did not agree about those things, It happened because James laugh about those kind of memes and feels happy about that. James then replying again with feeling loved and smile with hug emojis. El Mago replying James again with question and information that such a place is not bad, from his suggestion we supposed that he got those information from others. In this case he shows negative attitude, it can be interpret he want to offends James in the group. But then James replies El question with short answer "nope" indicates that he told the truth and have no ideas again about the conversation. James then sent meme that means he felt cornered by El Mago but no one helped El to do shame to James. James feels safe because sending that meme with pictures who shows flat face.
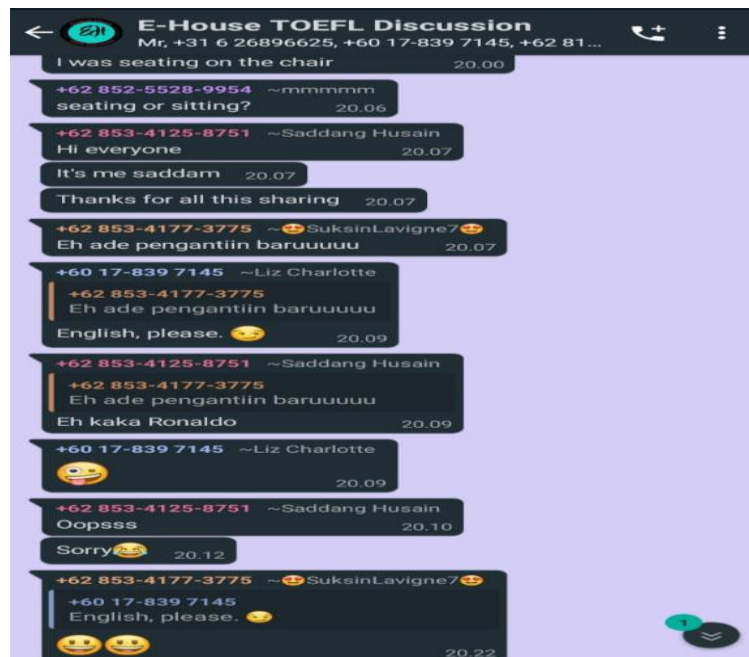
Image 4. The Using of Emoticon and Sticker in WAP

In the picture above shows men wearing a mask and also wear the same uniform, one of them seems reading a papper containing serious case. Emoticon shows that El Mago feels little bit not sure to send the picture, but he strengthens himself with his sentence "and the ting goes kaboom" that means he shows his opinion. And then Ashwin Chettiar replies El's picture with "Lol" means he laugh about the picture. It also can interpret that Ashwin just wants to respond El.

Image 5. The Using of Emoticon and Sticker in WAP

On the other hand, members of WhatsApp group which is notably more academic than previous group also mostly use emoticon and sticker as the displayed data above. The title of the group is "e-house TOEFL Discussion" where Syaiful Ramadhan sends a text "I saw myself in the mirror" and right after that there is a response from Siti Maria Ulva who is confused about why he suddenly sends that sentence, however the text from Mr. Al does not have correlation from the previous one. Discussing the text from Syaiful Ramadhan "I saw myself in the mirror" Liz Charlotte looks trying to reply by saying "where were you at that time? #anticipating a horror movie, and she puts some emoticon such as bearing a laugh by using hand to close mouth is reflecting that she looks that she understands enough about how to interpret a meaning of that emoticon. The real meaning of emoticon and sticker must be understood by the users, it will provide the better communication transfer process. Therefore, the meaning of Siti Maria is well-transferred. However, uncorrelated text from Mr. Also shows if he is a newcomer in that group and he uses apologized emoticon which reflects that he is so polite to sorry and begging. Here, the gender of Mr. Al also plays a pivotal role where he tries to be a warm person. Emoticon and sticker are intentional and unintentional signs to succeed the transfer of emotion. Emoticon and sticker are intended to assure that the transferred message is well-received.

Image 6. The Using of Emoticon and Sticker in WAP

"I was seating on the chair" means Syaiful Ramadhan replies Liz question. Then Saddang Husain introduces himself to everyone in the group. He also says that he shows his gratitude and says thank you about sharing. Then SuksinLavigne7 said that there is a groom in the group that means Saddang. Liz Charlotte protests and shows that she disagrees for Suksin language because she uses bahasa. Saddang replies Suksin statement with saying "Eh kaka Ronaldo" that means face of Suksin similar with Ronaldo or he is a big fans of Ronaldo. Ronaldo here means a famous soccer player. Liz Charlotte then sends winking emoji. It is like she feel does not matter about what call of Sadang appellation. Saddang feels guilty he asks an apology with lol emoji that means he does not apologize seriously. She replies with happy emoji because she feels happy there are people who remind her and she feels happy because of that. however, it also can be analyzed that she does not have close relationship with Liz and she does not know how to reply warning of Suksin.

**Image 7. The Using of Emoticon and Sticker in WAP**

The next disscussion which has no correlation with the previous message, and then it is followed by someone who has a number code +93778089865, which origins from Afganisthan who sends a broadcast message which contains the obligation to send the message and does not let the message stop. because it contains with a knowledge, motivation and reminder as a human being we have to always remember our God. In the broadcast which is shared "Arabic script was followed by "plz don't keep it in your inbox, share the knowledge, please read to the end. The next sentence which separated by Enter "you hardly…; but he loves you and always bleses you. Read more....." and after ten minutes later there is a response from Syaiful Ramadhan who said "thank", from this word it can be concluded that Syaiful Ramadan does not use emotion and only replies "thank", it looks monotonous and flat read, which shows that syaiful does not interest with the broadcast which has shared . Then followed by responses from Abdi. The first respond, he replies "wa'alaikumus salam wa rahmatullahi wabarokatuh (in arabic script as well) " even the group is about "e-house TOEFL Discussion" .

Ardi still replies the *salam* from the broadcast message from the Afghan person even the message he shared it does not have correlation at all with the TOEFL Discussion. It shows that he respects to him by replying *salam*. The second respond is two minutes after relpying the message "just let people know i am looking at this group but i am suffering the corona so i am not too active if you have a question though please feel free # me and i'll do my best to help".

From this message it shows that he is intentionally ask someone to feel free giving his a question and kindly he will reply the question if he is active.

4.2 Discussion

Based on the data, the researcher found emoji most used were ROTFL for 55%, feeling loved for 18%, smile with hug for 18% and grinning face for 9%. The following detail percentage can be seen in Chart 1.
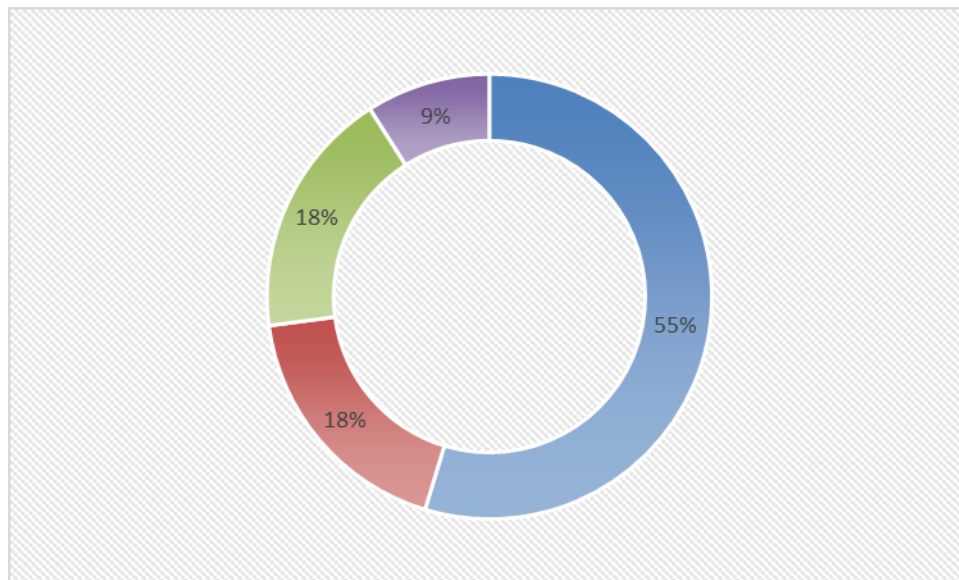
Chart 1. Percentage of Emoticons Used in WhatsApp

From the pie chart above, the date can be interpreted that the emoticon users try to cheer up the situation even the context or the text is not so. Therefore, it will support or even it changes the meaning transfer process. On the other hand, the users or utilizers of emoticon and sticker actually are not determined from the gender. Both masculine and feminine use it at the say way and intensity. However, the feminine will use it over-redundantly (see image 5) based on Miller et al (2016) about emoji can affect the interpretation of message.

Moreover, the users or senders of emoticon do not only represent feminism but it also represents the masculinity to have such kind of romantic, humor or casual image (Gesselman et al, 2019). According to Das (2020) there are many things to impact emoji usage: age, relationship type, gender, etc. In this case relationship type affect the communication. In the conversation context shows they have intimate relationship than others because Saddang with his any doubt calls Liz with uncommon name and Liz feels that it is good.

V. CONCLUSION

Most of emoticon and sticker users still have limited understanding about the real meaning of each emoticon and sticker. Hereby, the data are elucidated and analyzed by using the theories of implicit meaning, language gender and language identity which they have a string correlations in critical discourse analysis deal. Emoji and sticker are elaborated with the text or sometimes can replace the text itself, so sender can use it as their needs. In this digital era, millennial generation must be interested in using sticker and emoji when they text via WhatsApp. There are many emoji and sticker variations and absolutely they have their own meaning, that's why society must know the mean of the sticker and emoji they use. Only people in that situation will understand about the meaning, but be careful because education background, personalities, and their habits can influence different interpretation. Besides, society should comprehend that sticker use can minimize the time instead of typing, and this study is supposed to give contribution in sticker phenomenon to maximize the features. This research is also intended to give contribution for the upcoming researchers who have the same field to have a better researches.

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