

## The Use of Thumbs-Up Emoji in Lecturer-Students' WhatsApp Communication: Qualitative Study

Rizka Dwi Cahyani<sup>1</sup>, Rahmawansyah Sahib<sup>2</sup>, Wira Kafryawan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Tadris English Study Program

[rizkadwicahyani31@gmail.com](mailto:rizkadwicahyani31@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [rahmawansyah@iainfmpapua.ac.id](mailto:rahmawansyah@iainfmpapua.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>, [wira@iainfmpapua.ac.id](mailto:wira@iainfmpapua.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

Received	Revised	Accepted
21-08-2024	15-03-2025	19-03-2025

**Abstract**-Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi komunikasi Online Non-Verbal di WhatsApp melalui emoji Jempol yang menimbulkan kontroversi dan masalah kesopanan bagi masyarakat sekitar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui implikasi penggunaan emoji Thumbs-Up oleh dosen dan mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan menjadikan Dosen dan Mahasiswa Program Studi Bahasa Inggris IAIN Fattahul Muluk Papua sebagai informan dengan jumlah 9 informan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara dan observasi online untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis wacana yang terdiri dari empat tahap; Pencatatan data, transkripsi data, pemilihan data, dan interpretasi data. Dalam konteks penggunaan emoji Jempol dalam komunikasi WhatsApp antara Dosen dan Mahasiswa, tampaknya Dosen di Papua lebih dominan dalam menggunakan emoji Jempol sebagai bentuk apresiasi kepada Mahasiswa. Berdasarkan data yang diperoleh, implikasi yang ditimbulkan oleh penggunaan emoji Thumb membentuk dua kategori, antara lain implikasi emosional (perasaan cemas dan merasa tidak sopan) dan implikasi situasional (menyebabkan kesalahpahaman dan mengubah formalitas percakapan). Oleh karena itu, perlu ada penelitian yang memperdalam pengetahuan tentang penggunaan emoji lain yang juga sering digunakan dalam komunikasi WhatsApp dalam konteks akademik.

**Kata Kunci:** *Emoji, Implikasi, Acungan Jempol, Komunikasi WhatsApp*

**Abstract** - This study explores Non-Verbal Online Communication in WhatsApp using the Thumbs-Up emoji, due to controversy and politeness concerns. The researcher aims to explain the implications of using Thumbs-Up emoji for EFL Lecturers and Students. This study used the Qualitative method and selected the EFL Lecturers and EFL Students of the English Study Program IAIN Fattahul Muluk Papua as participants and it took 9 participants. Data collection was by interview and online observation to answer the research questions. The data was analyzed using discourse analysis which consists of four stages; data recording, data transcription, data selection, and data interpretation. In the context of the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji in lecturer-students' WhatsApp communication, EFL Lecturers in Papua were more dominant in using the Thumbs-Up emoji as Appreciation to EFL Students. Based on the data, the implication caused by using the Thumbs-Up emoji found two categories including feeling implication (anxious feeling and feeling rude) and situational implication (causing misunderstanding and changing the formality of conversation). Therefore, there needs a study that deepens knowledge on the use of another emojis that also often used in WhatsApp communication for Academic content.

**Keywords:** *Emojis, Implication, Thumbs-Up, WhatsApp Communication*

### INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly advanced digital era, people have experienced firsthand a major change in the way people communicate. The existence of the WhatsApp application is a form of progress in verbal communication that is useful in daily life. This short message service has an emoji feature that helps a person establish non-verbal communication as a form of conveying emotions and feelings that cannot be conveyed directly (Syahfitri et al., 2021). Especially in the context of higher education, emojis are also often used in communication via WhatsApp between lecturers and students (Regina et al., 2020). In communication between lecturers and students, there are times when students use thumbs-up emojis as a quick response to respond to messages from their lecturers but this causes some misunderstandings between lecturers and students feel guilty for using Thumbs-up emojis to their lecturer. At that time, communication using the emoji feature on the WhatsApp application turned out to have a gap in the implications of the emoji feature used in communicating between the sender and the recipient of the message. This phenomenon often occurs when lecturers send emojis in reply messages sent by their students. Not all students responded to lecturers' text messages in the form of emojis with positive responses or



vice versa. In a media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984), it is stated that media that are rich in social cues such as emojis, can increase understanding through emotions. However, when the media used has a limited gesture such as emojis that are used without any accompanying text captions, this can be misinterpreted. In other words, the use of emojis alone in a WhatsApp text conversation is not enough to convey the emotions intended by emoji users. In this case, the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji has limitations that can have an impact on the sender and recipient of the message.

This research uses Schmitz's theory (Schmitz, 2002) in analyzing information related to non-verbal communication. Where Schmitz (2002) gives the idea that non-verbal communication is the process of generating meaning using behavior, not words. In another case with the opinion of Ottenheimer and Pine (2017) by (Safitri, 2022) which states that non-verbal communication is the process of conveying information without using oral language or sign language. These two definitions have differences in their respective meanings. In a statement by Schmitz (2002), it is said that non-verbal communication is processed by behavior and not through words. In contrast to the statements of Ottenheimer and Pine (2017) in their speeches which emphasized that non-verbal communication occurs without verbal communication. Thus, it is necessary to underline the difference between non-verbal communication and non-verbal communication.

There is a clear distinction between non-verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Oral refers to the medium that is spoken, namely through the mouth, while verbal refers to words, both written and spoken (Grammarist, 2024). Thus, non-verbal is defined as a form of communication without using the mouth as a communication medium to express the purpose of communication. Non-verbal means a form of communication with behavior as a medium of communication and without containing words from word of mouth. Non-verbal in its application can be gestures, intonation, and face imitation. Thus, sign language and writing are also included in the category of non-verbal communication because sign language and writing contain words without going through oral, as well as intonation and speaking style including non-verbal forms of communication.

In non-verbal online communication, emojis are a form of conveying feelings, and emotions and perfecting meaning in the process of cyber communication. In a book that discusses emoji semiotics, (Danesi, 2017) revealed that emojis are widely used in digital communication to convey emotions. They often give messages in a cheerful tone that their users find "fun". In addition to the function of emojis as a medium to convey feelings, in its application, it turns out that the use of emojis is not limited to its users. As part of this, research by (Roosyidah & Febriana, 2022) shows that parents also use the emoji feature as an online response that can give a sense of life to the message to be conveyed.

In its development, emojis are the result of regeneration rather than emoticons. Emojis and emoticons are quite commonly used nowadays to clarify the meaning of the message (Septiani, 2023). Scott Falhman, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, was the first person to connect colons, hyphens, and closed parentheses to produce emoticons with smiling face characters in 1982. Thus, emoticons were originally made up of lines, dots, and alphabets that were combined in such a way as to form an expressive character. As time went on, the combinations that existed instead of combining the characters of the writing progressively evolved. It is an innovation was created where the depiction of emoticons did not only start from ordinary characters but had been in the form of various visual images (Compare, 2017).

Non-verbal communication by Schmitz (2002) states that a process that generates meaning using behavior, is referred to as non-verbal communication. In line with research by (Aburumman et al., 2022) which states that non-verbal communication is one of the most powerful and expressive tools for sending and receiving social signals. The social signals that are expressed are used to connect one individual with another accompanied by a specific purpose so that non-verbal communication is established. In his research on nod behavior as a social signal in virtual interaction, Abburumman also described that although face-to-face physical communication remains the most powerful form of interaction, modern communication is often channeled by technology and conducted virtually.

Non-verbal development along with the WhatsApp application brings novelty in the form of online non-verbal communication. Nonverbal communication in the form of symbolism appears in the WhatsApp conversation room in the form of emojis contained in the WhatsApp feature. Thus, the WhatsApp platform is not only a form of verbal communication, but the WhatsApp platform paves the way to communicate through certain symbols as a communication support feature. In this case, the use of the emoji feature on WhatsApp is used as a medium to convey the following intentions and objectives as a form of communication that combines non-verbal communication and online communication. Thus, online non-verbal communication is formed.

Various studies have been conducted to investigate the implications of using thumbs-up emojis in WhatsApp communication. However, research on the implications of existing emojis tends to be studied in three ways: First, research on the types and functions of emoji use in WhatsApp family groups in Indonesia in gender and age variations by Faris (Faris et al., 2021). From the research, it was found that both men and women of different ages use the emojis "folded hands", "radiant face with smiling eyes", "palms together", "Thumbs-Up", and "face with hands over mouth" emojis in communication within family groups. Second, in the following year, research was conducted on the use of emojis between lecturers and students in Academic Groups on the WhatsApp application by Firdani (Firdiani et al., 2022) with the finding that the majority of study participants like to use emojis at the end of sentences as a complement to the communication process and describe deeper feelings in academics' WhatsApp groups. Third, in the same year a study by Shen (Shen & Marriott Secondary School, 2022) discussing the influence of the use of emojis in marketing slogans on consumer buying interest, the results of his research found that the use of emojis in marketing slogans can increase consumer interest. From the existing research trends, there is a gap in ideas related to its implications caused by using the Thumb emoji in academic communication for EFL Lecturers and EFL Students in Papua.

This research is intended to fill the existing research gap from the previous research that has been carried out, namely about the use of emojis in general by lecturers and students, the types, and functions of emojis in gender and age variations, and research on the influence of the use of emojis in marketing slogans which can increase consumer interest. In this case, there has been no research on the implications arising from the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji, especially in academic situations between lecturers and students. Where the research on the implications of using thumbs-up emojis through WhatsApp can be understood through the research question: What are the implications of the use of thumb emojis on the politeness of WhatsApp communication between lecturers and students? The answer to the formulation of the existing problem can provide information about the implications arising from the use of thumbs-up emoji as part of communication between lecturers and students so that they can gain in-depth knowledge due to the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji in academic situations, in particular.

Research on this phenomenon comes from an assumption that the perception of the meaning of using the Thumbs-Up emoji varies depending on the emotions or feelings of both parties, both the user of the Thumbs-Up emoji and the recipient. Related to this, of course, there will be an impact in terms of changes in the formalities of the conversation and the feelings of the message recipients. Thus, this research is intended to produce new information related to the implications of using thumbs-up emojis in communication between lecturers and students via WhatsApp.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study relies on a qualitative descriptive research design, this study investigate various forms of use of thumb emojis. This thumbs-up emoji is often used in the communication process by academic actors, especially in the Papua provincial area. Research related to thumbs-up emojis is considered to need to be studied qualitatively so that the data obtained to find the implications of using the Thumbs-Up emoji can be described appropriately. As Murdiyanto said (Murdiant, 2020) Qualitative research is research that produces findings that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or by other quantification methods so that it refers to data described through words. Qualitative research can also be interpreted as research that focuses on understanding social problems in the context of vast, complex, and detailed realities or natural settings.

The data in this study was collected directly from EFL Lecturers and EFL Students of the English Language Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah, IAIN Fattahul Muluk Papua for the second to eighth academic years of the 2023/2024 academic year with a total of 29 students and 4 lecturers. The resource persons were determined through a purposive sampling technique where the indicator of this instrument considered how often the resource persons found the Thumbs-up emoji as well as how often they used the Thumbs-up emoji in WhatsApp communication in the academic context by lecturers and students. So that the existing data will be following the needs to be the results of the findings in this study.

In addition to conducting interviews, data was also collected through online observation to strengthen the data. After determining the appropriate sampling technique, the researcher submitted the willingness of the participants to observe conversation activity on the WhatsApp platform. This is done to identify the use of Thumbs-Up emojis in private conversation rooms and academic groups. In the next stage, the researcher saw a sheet to record the data found based on the frequency of use of the Thumbs-Up emoji, the context of the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji, and how the response from the recipient of the message to the emoji. Data is collected in the form of screenshots to then be categorized based on predetermined indicators. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the data found

using qualitative analysis to understand the meaning behind the use of emojis.

In the interview data collection technique, initially data is qualitatively collected by the process of asking questions to informants. The researcher asked about the form of thumbs emoji use and the implications of emoji use through several questions. The interview process was conducted with EFL lecturers and EFL students as informants in this study. The interview was conducted using the art of interview structure in the form of open-ended questions. Where the open-ended question is intended to explore the breadth of understanding that informants have regarding the use of thumb emojis during communication via WhatsApp. The data collected through the interview process is then analyzed qualitatively through discourse analysis. Where the discourse analysis is based on several stages:

Data collection is the initial stage in the data analysis process of this research. Where the analysis process is carried out after all the data is met. Such as observation data and interview data, which then the data is in the form of audio recordings. Once the data is collected, the second stage in the analysis is the transcription of the data. Interview data collected through voice recordings was analyzed by processing voice recordings into transcripts. Where the data transcription process involves listening to voice recordings repeatedly. Furthermore, the voice recordings listened to by the researcher were written in such a way that the entire transcript of the interview was in the form of text. After all the data collected has been processed into transcripts. Next, the researcher intervened at the data selection stage. In the data selection process, the researcher first classifies the data in the transcript based on the research objectives. Data were selected by prioritizing data representation with each indicator in the research objectives. The selection results are classified in the research results section using an extract mark. Data from the selection is then obtained at the data interpretation stage. At the data interpretation stage, the researcher presented information to answer the research objectives, namely about the implications of using thumb emojis between lecturers and students through the WhatsApp application. Where the information presented will be explained in detail based on findings in the field. So that the meaning of the findings can be fully understood.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher analyzes from the point of view of communication politeness the impact of thumbs in WhatsApp conversations on the recipient and sender of messages between teachers and students.

### 1. Implications of Feelings

#### Causes Feelings of Anxiety

In the first finding, the implications arising from the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji on communicative politeness carried out by EFL Lecturers and EFL Students are that it can cause anxiety. According to the following information from EFL Students (SPW)

Extract I

*"I am very scared and worried. What if my sentence can cause problems later?" (SPW)*

In line with SPW's statement, other EFL Students (AT) also made similar statements related to anxiety using the Thumbs-Up emoji in their conversations with EFL lecturers.

Extract II

*"There is a sense of anxiety ... That's very worrying, so if I want to use a thumb emoji, I'll look at who I use it to first." (ON)*

Information from the above participants has confirmed that users of the Thumbs-Up emoji may experience anxiety when sending it in response to EFL Lecturers in chat rooms on WhatsApp. Based on SPW's statement in the extract I, he stated that when using the Thumbs-Up emoji to respond to lecturers, he felt cautious about the occurrence of misunderstandings for related lecturers in using thumb emojis. In line with AT's statement in extract II which states that when using the Thumbs-Up emoji causes anxiety and caution according to AT, he needs to chew to the EFL Lecturer so that AT feels safe to send the Thumbs-Up emoji.

The second implication that arises from the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji on communicative decency carried out by EFL Lecturers and EFL Students is that the messenger feels rude to the interlocutor. The use of the Thumbs-Up emoji has a different digestion for each person; these differences can trigger different perceptions for a person in capturing their meaning and behavior. This can make emoji users feel disrespectful when using Emojis to

respond to ongoing conversations on WhatsApp. The statement posted by one of the sixth-semester EFL Students (FRK) is as follows:

Extract III

*"Yes, that's all, I'm afraid it's a bit rude and disrespectful. Well, if you don't explain it, it would be a mistake to think what this means,"*

In a different version than the one delivered by FRK, a similar statement was also delivered in an interview session by an EFL Student (NF).

Extract IV

*"Because usually students use other emojis, so what is his name? folded hands? Well, if we're going to try another emoji, it's a bit scary, I mean, a little worried. Worrying about it is considered disrespectful". (NF)*

Based on the explanation by FRK and NF which have a harmonious statement, this explains that the use of the Thumb Up emoji triggers uncomfortable feelings in the recipient so that the sender of the Thumb Lift emoji is worried that the recipient of the message will be considered disrespectful. In line with the statement in extract IV by NF which states that the use of the Thumbs emoji is not as common as the use of folded hand emojis in WhatsApp conversations between lecturers and students. This affected NF's thinking; he was worried that he would be considered disrespectful using other emojis that were also less commonly used.

## 2. Situational Implications

### Causes Misunderstandings

The next implication that can arise from the use of Thumbs-Up Emoji in the WhatsApp conversation room between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students is that it can cause misunderstandings. Misunderstandings are inevitable when everyone perceives the meaning of something differently. In this case, in particular, the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji can also cause misunderstandings for the recipient of the message. By the following statement delivered by EFL Lecturers (HP).

Extract V

*"If there is a misunderstanding, it is a misunderstanding about the use of Thumbs-Up emojis. Yes, it can happen. People receive different names" (HP)*

In line with this statement, RR also conveyed it in his statement as follows;

Extract VI

*"Yes, I'm afraid it's a wrong perception. But it depends on the character of the recipient, whether they will be accepted or not" (RR)*

Based on the statement of HP and RR above, this has clarified that the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji in WhatsApp conversations between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students can cause misunderstandings. In extract V, the EFL HP Lecturer stated that there is a possibility of misunderstandings that can arise from the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji. This can happen because everyone has a different perception. In line with this, in extract VI with RR's statement stating that RR was worried about the emergence of misperception so he felt the need to know the character of the recipient of the message before using the Thumb emoji as a chat response to the relevant lecturer.

### Change the Formality of the Conversation

The fourth implication of using the Thumbs-Up Emoji in the WhatsApp conversation room between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students is that the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji can change the formality of the conversation. The quality of the context of the conversation between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students may decrease. In other words, in a formal conversation situation, when the sender of a message uses the Thumbs-Up emoji in the WhatsApp conversation room, it can turn the conversation situation into informal. So during the interview session, an EFL Student (SPW) stated the following;

Extract VII

*"So maybe the Thumbs-Up emoji is usually used at the end of a conversation, so it already symbolizes relaxation, no longer too tense and becomes informal." (SPW)*

In line with this statement, the EFL Lecturer also conveyed this in the interview session. In his statement, (HP) conveyed the following:

Extract VIII

*"Yes, because emojis are like quick responses, non-verbal language. The context is more relaxed and informal. If we want to be formal, we use words" (HP)*

Based on the results of interviews and statements conducted by SPW and HP show that the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji in conversation sessions on the WhatsApp application between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students can change the formality of the conversation so that the forum becomes informal. Conveyed in extract VII delivered by SPW, he stated that the use of the Thumbs emoji which is usually found at the end of a sentence shows a transition to the closing sentence so that the conversation situation in the chat room is more relaxed or informal. Likewise with the statement conveyed by HP in extract VIII, he stated that emojis are a form of quick response for a person in providing a reply message in the form of non-verbal communication. This causes a change in the quality of the context of the conversation to become more relaxed or informal.

From the findings that have been described, it can be found that the use of thumbs-up emojis in WhatsApp conversations between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students has a significant impact on communication politeness. The use of this emoji can trigger feelings of anxiety, and worry that it will be considered disrespectful, and cause misunderstandings due to differences in perception between individuals. In addition, the use of thumbs-up emojis can also change the formality of conversations to be more casual and informal, potentially affecting the quality of interaction in the academic realm. These findings confirm that although the thumbs-up emoji is considered a positive symbol in the context of academic communication, its use needs to consider the situation, context, and character of the recipient of the message so as not to create a misperception.

## DISCUSSION

This study analyzes the implications of using the Thumbs-Up emoji on the WhatsApp application by EFL Lecturers and EFL Students, which turns out to tend to be divided into several things. First, the application of the Thumbs-Up emoji in WhatsApp communication causes anxiety for its users. This is based on the difference in the perspective of the emoji recipient so that the use of the Thumbs emoji triggers anxious feelings for the user. Second, it was found that the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji can lead to misunderstandings. This misunderstanding can be a mistake when interpreting the form of using the Thumbs-Up Emoji in communication. Third, the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji in WhatsApp communication triggers the sender's prejudice against the recipient of the message. This feeling of disrespect can interfere with the comfort of the communication that is being established. Fourth, communication on WhatsApp using the Thumbs-Up emoji can change the formality of the conversation context. This change occurs from the level of formal to informal conversation context.

The use of Non-Verbal Online Communication, especially the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji in WhatsApp communication, not only tends to have negative implications. However, we can also understand it with positive implications such as; 1) saves time, 2) saves words, and 3) shows expressive conversations. The use of the Thumb emoji helps the existing communication process between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students at the IAIN Fattahul Muluk Papua campus in WhatsApp communication. In this case, it was also found that the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji by EFL Students to EFL Lecturers was neutral, or in other words EFL Lecturers could respond to the use with a positive point of view in accepting it. However, it is possible that the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji can also elicit a negative point of view from the recipient. However, in the culture of the Indonesian nation which contains Eastern customs and upholds the value of politeness and manners in society, it is necessary to pay attention to the value of politeness that will be conveyed. However, in the context of students in Papua, they tend to use the Thumbs-Up emoji in reasonable conditions so as not to interfere in terms of politeness in talking to the EFL Lecturer as the recipient of the message.

Research on emojis in various contexts has revealed significant implications for their use. Good implications from the use of emoji emojis on e-commerce platforms, the law of thumb emoji in Indonesia, to the use of onomatopoeia in webtone which has the potential to be related to the use of emojis in digital communication. Where, the researcher (Adzqia & Adialita, 2024) found that the use of emoji emoticons on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee can influence impulsive buying behavior by triggering positive emotions. Research from (Sihombing et al., 2024; Amir & Jakob, 2020), researchers explored the legal implications of thumb emojis in Indonesia they found that the regulation of the use of thumb emojis in Indonesia has not been regulated and also revealed that there are differences in alternate taking between male and female EFL teachers in the learning process in the

classroom. Then, a study discussed the use of onomatopoeia in webtones by (Wibowo & Sena, 2024) He found that the most commonly found type is a human-made sound, and the most commonly found meaning is an imitation of a human behavior due to the many interactions between characters from its visual storytelling, which is potentially related to the use of emojis in digital communication.

A study by (Aulia dkk., 2024) which discusses non-verbal communication by elevating the culture of the Papuan people, namely the kaonak greeting. Although there are differences in the form and media of the Thumb and Kaonak greeting emojis, these two movements show the way the Papuan people and the younger generation in Papua express themselves in a non-verbal way. Both of these things also emphasize the importance of social acceptance and recognition in their respective communities. Kaonak greetings play a role in strengthening social relationships in the context of traditional culture, while Thumbs-Up emojis allow Papuan students to stay connected and express themselves through the digital world in the non-verbal language of Online Communication.

However, this study offers new insights into how the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji in the WhatsApp application can have implications for the polite communication that exists between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students. The intended implications include causing feelings of anxiety, feelings of disrespect, triggering misunderstandings, and changing the formal context of the conversation. However, this study collectively shows that the Thumbs-Up emoji is a simple emoji that can provide implications for its users in WhatsApp communication.

This study provides information on the possible various implications of the use of the Thumbs emoji between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students. So that users of the Thumbs-Up emoji can realize the importance of considering the possibilities that may occur if we use the Thumbs-Up emoji in WhatsApp conversations. This opens insights so that Thumbs-Up emoji users can be selective in using the Thumbs-Up emoji in WhatsApp conversations between EFL Lecturers and EFL Students. However, this can be done by users to establish communication so that it runs better. This is of course by paying attention to the implications of using the Thumbs-Up emoji in WhatsApp communication in the world of higher education by EFL Lecturers and EFL Students.

## CONCLUSION

Not only does non-verbal communication involve the use of language directly or orally, but also non-verbal communication occurs online through digital platforms. In this study, non-verbal online communication can be defined as the use of symbols on a platform to generate a specific meaning. Researchers examined non-verbal communication used on the WhatsApp digital platform through emoji features. This shows that the use of the Thumbs-Up emoji by EFL faculty and students has an impact on two things: emotional and situational. The most felt implication by Thumb emoji users is anxiety, especially EFL students. There were four elements found in the interview process with nine interviewees, namely the use of Thumbs-Up emoji in communication between lecturers and students triggered feelings of anxiety, and disrespect, caused misunderstandings, and changed the context of the conversation to informal. The explanation above provides answers to research questions regarding the implications of using the Thumbs-Up emoji by lecturers and students in the WhatsApp application by lecturers and students.

This research is limited to the form of using the Thumb emoji and also the implications of using the Thumb emoji in polite communication between EFL Lecturers and the EFL Student English Study Program IAIN Fattahul Muluk Papua on the WhatsApp application. In the process of collecting data regarding the use of the Thumb Up emoji, the data found was dominated by EFL lecturers as users of the Thumb emoji. This is based on EFL students at IAIN Fattahul Muluk Papua who pay attention to ethics in communication and consider the politeness of the communication process that occurs with EFL lecturers regarding the data that has been found at the research data collection location. In line with this, it is suggested that further research is needed that seeks to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding. It is also hoped that research can be conducted that discusses the topic of using other emojis in the WhatsApp feature and the implications arising from the use of the Thumb Up emoji so that later this research can become a more in-depth study.

The researcher suggested that research can be improved by providing suggestions for students, lecturers, researchers, and IAIN Fattahul Muluk Papua. For EFL students, this research can help them understand politeness in speaking, especially through non-verbal communication using Thumbs-Up emojis in WhatsApp conversations. This can help students strengthen their relationships with lecturers and enrich their academic interactions. For lecturers, this research can provide a new perspective on functional forms of communication, especially the use of emojis as feedback in WhatsApp conversations. It can bridge communication gaps, making interactions faster and more emotional, especially in the fast-paced teaching and learning of EFL. For future researchers, this research can provide a basis for exploring new aspects in the study of linguistics, such as the use of digital symbols in

communication and the impact of non-verbal language in digital interactions. The research also aims to enrich existing scientific knowledge and improve the academic reputation of the campus, demonstrating the campus's commitment to advancing science and positively impacting society.

## REFERENCE

- Aburumman, N., Gillies, M., Ward, J. A., & Hamilton, A. F. D. C. (2022). Nonverbal communication in virtual reality: Nodding as a social signal in virtual interactions. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 164(February), 102819. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2022.102819>
- Adzqia, D., & Adialita, T. (2024). PENGARUH SALES PROMOTION TERHADAP IMPULSE BUYING MELALUI POSITIVE EMOTION PENGGUNA E-COMMERCE SHOPEE. *Equilibrium : Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi, Manajemen Dan Akuntansi*, 13(1), 76. <https://doi.org/10.35906/equili.v13i1.1880>
- Aulia, T., Sahib, R., Wijayanti, E., & Rahmawati, S. ita. (2024). Exploring on the Use of Kaonak Greeting as Non-Verbal Communication By the Native Papuan in Jayapura City. *Studies in Education, Literature, and Linguistics*, 08, 13. <https://ejournal-fkip.unisi.ac.id/index.php/eji/>
- Daft, R., & Lengel, R. (1984). Media Richness Theory. In *Media Richness Theory SCRIPT*. DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL.
- Danesi, M. (2017). *The semiotics of emoji: The rise of visual language in the age of the internet* (Bloomsbury (ed.)). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Faris, I. N. I., Budiarti, D., & Permadi, A. (2021). Emojis in Indonesian Intergenerational Family WhatsApp Group. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Conference on Applied Linguistics (CONAPLIN 2020)*, 546(Conaplin 2020), 217–224. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210427.033>
- Firdiani, A. U., Kahar, R., Syahfitri, Y. R., Sumarsih, & Natsir, M. (2022). Emoji in WhatsApp Group Conversation: Study on Barthes Theory of Semiotics. *Education and Humanities Research*, 591(Aisteel), 75–92. <https://doi.org/10.11113/lspi.v9.18434>
- Grammarist. (2024). *Oral Vs Verbal*. Grammarist. <https://grammarist.com/usage/oral-verbal/#:~:text=Here's the traditional distinction%3A Verbal,to things that are spoken.>
- Kumparan. (2017). *Emoji dan Emoticon*. Kumparan Tech. <https://kumparan.com/kumparantech/emoji-dan-emoticon-itu-beda-berikut-penjelasan-lengkapnya/full>
- Murdiyanto, E. (2020). Metode Penelitian Kualitatif (Sistematika Penelitian Kualitatif). In *Yogyakarta Press*. [http://www.academia.edu/download/35360663/METODE\\_PENELITIAN\\_KUALITAIF.docx](http://www.academia.edu/download/35360663/METODE_PENELITIAN_KUALITAIF.docx)
- Regina, R. W., Endang, S., & Khoirul, E. (2020). Penggunaan Emoticon Whatsapp Bagi Mahasiswa Sumba Tengah Di Universitas Wisnuwardhana Malang. *Jurnal Penelitian & Pengkajian Ilmiah Mahasiswa (JPPIM)*, Volume: 1, 79–89.
- Roosyidah, T. K., & Febriana, P. (2022). Analisis Stiker Whatsapp Sebagai Simbol Dalam Komunikasi Dikalangan Manula (Whatsapp Grup Keluarga Besar Asrama Polisi Nelayan (Arnel). *Ekspresi Dan Persepsi : Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 5(2), 181–190. <https://doi.org/10.33822/jep.v5i2.4332>
- Safitri, R. (2022). *ANALYSIS OF VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN BARACK OBAMA ' S FAREWELL ADDRESS SPEECH* *Journal of English Literature and Linguistic Studies*. 1(1), 39–49.
- Schmitz, J. R. (2002). *Humor as a pedagogical tool in foreign language and translation courses*.
- Septiani, Z. (2023). *Sejarah Emoji, Ikon yang Sering Disamakan dengan Emotikon*. Detik.COM. <https://www.detik.com/edu/detikpedia/d-6835865/sejarah-emoji-ikon-yang-sering-disamakan-dengan-emotikon>
- Shen, Y., & Marriott Secondary School, E. (2022). *Frontiers in Business, Economics and Management Research on the Influence of Emoji in Advertising Slogans on Consumers' Purchase Intention-Investigating the Positive Effects of Emoji on Consumer Reactions to Product Slogans*. 6(3), 1–5.



Sihombing, E. R., Ramli, T. S., & Putri, S. A. (2024). *Emoji Thumbs-Up Sebagai Bentuk Persetujuan Terhadap Kontrak Berdasarkan Hukum Positif di Indonesia*. 03(03), 323–333.

Syahfitri, Y. R., Sumarsih, & Natsir, M. (2021). *Emoji in WhatsApp Group Conversation: Study on Barthes Theory of Semiotics*. *Education and Humanities Research*, 591(Aisteel), 5. file:///C:/Users/nadha/Downloads/Documents/125962806.pdf

Wibowo, W., & Sena, Y. W. (2024). *PEMAKNAAN ONOMATOPE PADA WEBTOON “THE SECRET OF ANGEL.”* *AKSARABACA Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Budaya*, 2(2), 332–336. <https://doi.org/10.47313/aksarabaca.v2i2.3167>