



Emoji and Text Combined: How They Affect and Relate to Each Other in Advertisement on Twitter

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the abundance of emoji usage in social media. However, the research that focuses on the status relation and the function of emoji in meaning construction in a text is rather limited. This paper examines the status relation of emoji and textual mode, and functions of emoji as used by two selected musicians in posting advertisement on Twitter. The data consists of combinations of emoji and textual element taken from Katy Perry and Bruno Mars' advertisement uploads on Twitter. In order to determine the status relation and the function, I used Martinec and Salway's generalized system of image-text relation (2005). In terms of status relation, the conclusion that emerges is that, in context of advertisement, emoji is positioned as subordination, complement and independent of text mode. Emoji is seen to be ineffective to convey specific message and, in purpose to have understandable meaning, it needs to be embedded along with textual element. Furthermore, the emoji serves several functions. They can serve as elaboration, extension, enhancement: place and projection: locution. In other words, emoji functions as synonym or hyponym of the textual element, additional information beyond the textual element and circumstantial participant in a transitivity process.

Keywords: *Image-Text Relation; Logico-Semantic Relation; Status Relation; Emoji; Advertisement*

Introduction

In 1999, emoji was invented and the usage of emoticon is reduced due to this invention (Pavalanathan and Einstein, 2015). The term emoji, which is a loanword from Japanese, identifies "a small digital image or icon used to express an idea or emotion in electronic communication" (OED 2015). The basic difference of emoticon and emoji is at the form of them. Emoticon is constructed with punctuations to represents the emotions (e.g., :-D, T_T) while emoji has its original form as image (e.g., 🤔, 😊). This research discusses the relation of emoji and textual element only.

Oxford English Dictionary (2015) defines emoji as the digital image functioning to express emotion in an electronic communication. In 2015, Oxford English Dictionary announced the *Face with Tears of Joy* 😂 its word of the year, which boosted the popularity of the terms emoji. It is also estimated that half of the digital verbal messages use emoji (Emogi, 2017). This indicates a change in the way social

media is used as a means of communication. Therefore, in range of 2017-2019 the number of articles that include emoji as a topic of discussion has increased (Bai et al., 2019).

In general, emoji has the function to convey non-textual elements, i.e. facial expression, intonation and gesture (Danesi, 2017; Wagner, Marusek, and Yu, 2020). For instance, the impression contained in the combination of textual and visual expressions 'hahaha 🤔' is different from the combination of 'hahaha 😊'. In this case, emoji adds intonation to the textual element. Emoji also has the fun effect in it, improving the social boundary between the users (Danesi, 2017). In addition, Sugiyama (2015) also mentioned that emoji has its own role in maintaining relationship between users and expressing aesthetic selves of the sender. Furthermore, Pohl, Domin and Rohs (2017) found that there are five functions of emoji in general: decorative use (i.e. Happy birthday! 🎂), stand in use (i.e. Out for a 🍷), emotional use (i.e. Sure! Go ahead! 😊), reaction use (☐ (okay)) and stand-alone use (i.e. 🤔🎄🎅🎁 (I'm stressed out by Christmas shopping)).

Several approaches have been applied in analyzing the function of emoji in textual digital messages, such as rapport management (Sampietro, 2019), interactional sociolinguistics (Rashidi, 2018), politeness strategy (Kavanagh, 2016), and conversational analysis (Gibson, Huang and Yu, 2018). The researches have revealed the function of emoji in enhancing both positive and negative effect during an interaction, supporting Danesi (2017), as well as enhancing informality. However, the function of emoji in meaning construction is still unexplored, for example whether emoji is elaborating or visualizing the textual element in a clause. Status relation is also still undiscovered.

Martinec and Salway (2005) categorized the relation of image and text into two types of logico-semantic relation: expansion and projection. The categorization is based on Halliday's clause complex relation system with the same name. The adoption of Barthes's status relation (1994) is applicable to explain the status relation of image and the textual in a text. Martinec and Salway claimed that this system is applicable to any genre of text in which textual and visual element co-occur (Martinec and Salway, 2005). Therefore, the system is used in this research.

In this study, researchers used generalized system of image-text relation (2005) developed by Martinec and Salway. This study shows how the emoji and textual elements co-occur in meaning construction, as well as revealing the status relation between the two modals (image and text). The purpose of this study was to find out the function of the emoji and how emoji and textual elements are related on the Twitter posts of the several selected musicians, specifically in context of advertisement.

Research Methods

This is a qualitative descriptive research. The method is to reveal the symbolic message of a text or a discourse (Krippendorff, 1980). This research focuses on the function of emoji and its relation with the textual element in advertisement posts. I used Martinec and Salway's system of image-text relation (2005). The texts analyzed are the advertisement posts by Katy Perry and Bruno Mars, in which emoji and textual elements are combined. Using descriptive methods, this research describes the construction of image, especially emoji, and text on advertisements posted in Twitter by selected musicians.

The data from this study are a group of selected advertisement texts published on Twitter by Bruno Mars and Katy Perry. From each account, 30 advertisement texts are taken. The advertisements texts need to contain a both emoji and textual element. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. This method of data analysis is used to explore the function and status relation between emoji and text in advertising posts by musicians on Twitter.

Theoretical Review

Previous Research

Research on the combination of emoji and text has been done before. Some previous studies have relevance in topics and approaches with this research.

Several researchers conducted quantitative research on this topic. Riordan, (2017), Shah and Tewari (2021), and Koch, Romero and Stachl (2021) used survey techniques to obtain data. Meanwhile, Sugiyama (2015) used a focus group interview technique. These studies aim to find out how respondents perceive the use of emoji in a textual message. In contrast to these studies, data collection in this study was not carried out in the field, but was carried out using the observation method and note-taking technique. Moreover, the purpose of this study, which is to reveal the function and relational status of emoji, is achieved by analyzing the meaning construction that arises in the combination of text and emoji.

Some researches with various approaches seek to uncover the impressions that arise when a textual message is augmented with emoji, such as rapport management (Sampietro, 2019), interactional sociolinguistics (Rashidi, 2018), politeness strategies (Kavanagh, 2016), and conversation analysis (Gibson, Huang and Yu, 2018). However, they do not address the status of the text-emoji relationship, the significance of emoji and their function in meaning construction. On the other hand, this study focuses on uploaded monologue utterances and does not include utterances that occur in a dialog. Despite having the same topic, this is what makes this research different from these studies.

Then, Matulewska and Gwiazdowicz (2020) have also conducted a research that examines the use of emoji in textual uploads, which is also the object of this research. They concluded that emoji function to emphasize the emotional elements in the text. While this study examined the function of emoji in a textual post on social media, the extent of the relationship between emoji and text, and the possible role of emoji as a central element in textual messages were not explored.

Emoji

Originally designed by Shigetaka Kurita on 1999, emoji is a transliteration of e 絵 (e=image) 文 (mo=write) and 字 (ji=letter) (Bai, et.al, 2019). Danesi defined the term of emoji as “picture-word” (2017). Furthermore, Rodrigues, et.al, (2017) stated that emoji is a graphic symbols with predefined names and code (Unicode) which symbolizes facial expressions (e.g. 😊), abstract concepts (e.g. 🤔), and emotions/feelings (e.g. ❤️), but also animals (e.g. 🐼), plants (e.g. 🌹) activities (e.g. 🏠), gestures/body parts (e.g. 🙏), and objects (e.g. 📱) (Rodrigues et al., 2017). Therefore, the basic difference of emoji and other images is that every emoji has its own name and specific code that is called Unicode. The system of Unicode was then applied in several social media platforms, making the emoji usage in the chats and uploads possible.

The emoji is evolving in design and increasing in numbers. Emojipedia, an emoji search engine, categorizes emoji into several classifications: Smileys and People, Animals and Nature, Food and Drink, Activity, Travel and Places, Objects, Symbols and Flags (Emojipedia.org). With these developments, the use of emoji, whether embedded with text or not, become diverse.

Generalized System of Image-Text Relation

The system has two simultaneous sub-system: ‘status’ and ‘logico-semantics’, derived from Barthes’ (1997) image–text relations and Halliday’s (1994) interdependency and logico-semantic relations. Claimed to be applicable to any genre of text (Martinec and Salway, 2005), it focuses on describing the “relations where the image serves the text, where the text serves the image, and where

image and text are equally dependent or independent of each other” (Kornalijslijper, 2014).

Similar with interdependency relation in clause complex, the status relation in system is categorized into two types: equal (paratactic) and unequal (hypotactic). The relation is seen to be equal if the whole image relates to the whole process in textual elements, thus an unequal relation happens when the images relates only to part(s) of textual elements and vice versa. The equal status then is categorized into two sub-types: independent and complementary. When both modes depends on each other, it comes to complementary. The relation is meant to make a bigger syntagm than the image and textual elements itself. Independent status is realized in an image-text relation where image and text exist in parallel without relying on each other. The image and the text have their own process without affecting each other. The unequal status is categorized based on subordination, it is whether image subordinate to text or text subordinate to image.

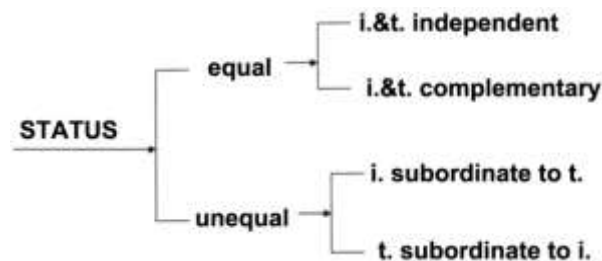


Figure 1. Status Relation by Radan Martinec and Andre Salway (2005)

As it is derived from Halliday’s logico-semantic relation, Martinec and Salway use both expansion and projection to model image-text relation. While projection uses one mode to represent the verbal or mental process of the other mode, as for expansion, the combination of image and text expands the modes. The projection then is divided into locution and illocution. Expansion is divided into elaboration, extension and enhancement.

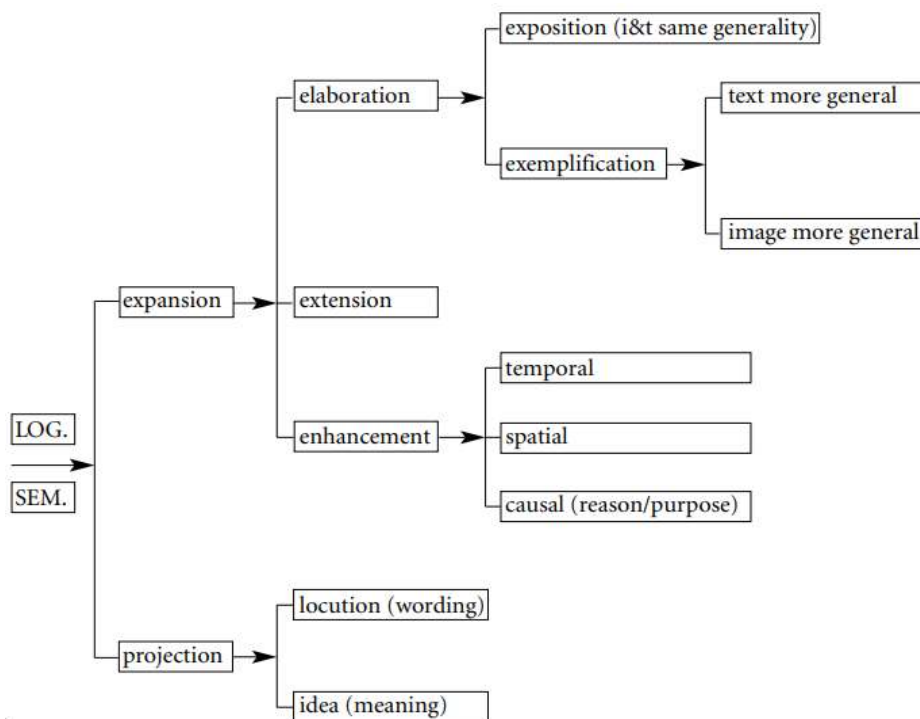


Figure 2. Logico-semantic relation by Radan Martinec and Andrew Salway (2005)

Elaboration occurs when one makes use of one mode to represent information about the other mode. The information can be more detailed or have similar level of generalization. The relation is realized by synonymy (similar generalization) and hyponymy (different generalization) relation between the modes. It has two sub-types: exposition, for same level of generalization, and exemplification, for different level of generalization. For instance, one may embed a laughing emoji in the end of laughter chat. The emoji represents the laughter chat in a different form, realizing a synonymy relation between the modes. Different relation will occur if the laughter is related with a sad emoji. Extension relation occurs in this situation, as emoji adds new information to the textual message.

Extension is a relation between image and text in which one mode adds a totally new information to the other mode, or, in other words, beyond the information that already exists in the other mode. In case of emoji usage, one may have a smiley emoji to add intonation or gesture to a textual message. This is a realization of emoji and textual message together constructing transitivity process: emoji adds material or behavioral process to the textual message.

Enhancement is when image and text related circumstantially. There are three kinds of enhancement: place, time and purpose/reason. For example, a photographer may writes down a caption as an additional information relating to the time or location the photograph is taken.

The second main type of relation is projection. As remarked earlier, this relation consists of two sub-type, locution and illocution. Locution occurs in an image-text relation where a mode represents the other mode in a verbal process. While illocution is realized in a mental process. Martinec and Salway (2005) gave an example of this relation using talking bubble, for locution/verbal process, and thinking bubble, for illocution/mental process in comic strip.

Discussion

Status Relation

In total, there are 115 data found in this research. The three kinds of status relation found are equal: independent, equal: complementary and unequal: image subordinate to text. Considering the context of the text chosen, unequal: text subordinate to image is unlikely to appear. Textual element is considered to be more effective in delivering a more specific message than image (Kress, 2010). Therefore, in an advertisement in which the information needs to be clear or rather specific, textual message is the central element.

Table 1. Status Relation

Musicians	Status Relation			Total
	Independent	Complementary	Image subordinate to text	
Bruno Mars	-	25	24	49
Katy Perry	9	29	31	69
Total	9	54	55	118

1) Independent Status

The first relation discussed in this section is equal: independent. Emoji is related to the whole process of textual message. The information flows in parallel without affecting each other. The

independent relations found were in association with synonymy and hyponymy relation. I found nine data representing independent relations.

As an example, in figure 3, Katy Perry advertised an event in Japan where she would perform, entitled *True Color Fest*. One part of text in which the combination of emoji and textual element co-occurred was the headline. Thus, the analysis was only done to this part. The emoji embedded was sakura emoji (🌸) alongside “TOKYO” as the textual element. “TOKYO” has the role as the hyponymy of sakura, which worked as the representation of Japan. The combination of emoji and textual element did not create a wider meaning than image or text alone.



Figure 3. Independent Status by Katy Perry

2) Complementary Status

The next image-text relation status discussed is equal: complementary. The combination of emoji and textual element is meant to create bigger syntagm than emoji or textual element alone. There were 51 realizations of complementary status found in this research.



Figure 4. Complementary Status by Bruno Mars

It can be seen that Bruno Mars in his post above invited his followers in Twitter to a New Year event. At the end of the clause, he mentioned “The Hooligans” to address his fans. There is a set of emoji representing a party, those are slot machine emoji (🎰), disco ball emoji (💿) and clinking glasses emoji (🍷). The set of emoji and textual element was combined to create bigger meaning than textual element or the set of emoji alone, and the result is such meaning: “let’s start year off right & rock by having party together with the fans”.

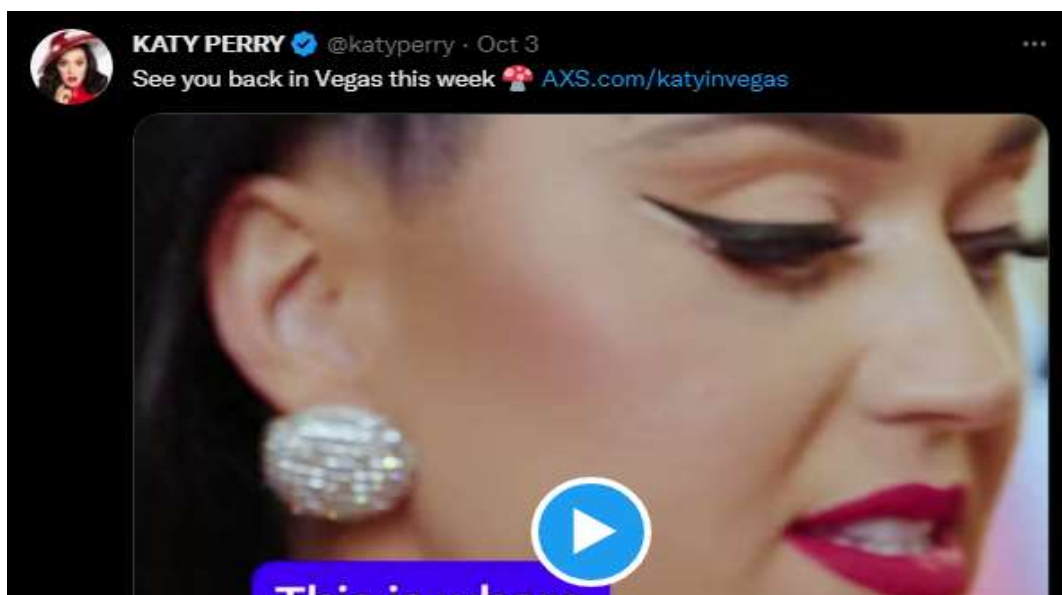


Figure 5. Complementary Status by Katy Perry

In figure 5, Katy Perry posted about her show that would be hold in Vegas that week. She added a link to access the show at the end of the post. A mushroom was embedded to represent the show she advertised. The show itself was entitled *PLAY* and used red mushroom as its icon. The emoji was related to the whole part of the text, both the headline and closing. The combination of emoji and textual element resulted in a bigger meaning than the textual or image element alone.

3) Image Subordinate to Text Status

The unequal status appears in an image-text combination in which image only relates to one or some parts of the process of textual element, or vice versa. In this section, the one type of unequal status relation discussed is image subordinate to text. In this research, the status comes up when emoji only relates or relies to the part(s) of textual element.

In figure 6, Bruno Mars posted an advertisement about his show as a personnel of Silk Sonic Boys duo. The show would be held in Las Vegas. The combination of emoji and text analyzed in this section was the set of card games emoji and the body copy part of the text. The set of emoji only related to “Las Vegas”, working as a hyponym of the text.

The other example is the post by Katy Perry in figure 7. The post is about a show that she had on the previous night. She also attached a YouTube video relating to the show. Image-text relation analyzed was the slot machine emoji (🎰) and the phrase “this special city”. The emoji only related to a phrase in the text, specifying the city that was Las Vegas.



Figure 6. Image Subordinate to Text Status by Bruno Mars

Logico-Semantic Relation

The relation is divided into two main types: expansion and projection, which have sub-types. From the expansion types, elaboration: exemplification occurred the most (59 data), followed by extension (46 data), elaboration: exposition (13 data), enhancement: place (4 data), and locution (4 data). This number of data indicates that the musicians tended to use emoji in a hyponymy relation and to extend the meaning of the textual element. The limited capability of image to convey more specific message (Kress, 2010), makes the emoji-text combination with enhancement: time or purpose/reason relation is still limited. Whereas, there are several categories of emoji that can be used to deliver information representing circumstances: place, such as the flag emoji and pointing or arrow emoji. Therefore, the enhancement: place appears more frequent than any other enhancement. In this research, the locution is realized by a set of music tone and smiley emoji combined with textual element.



Figure 7. Image Subordinate to Text Status by Katy Perry

Table 2. Logico-Semantic Relation

Musicians	Logico-Semantic Relation								Total
	Expansion			Projection					
	Elaboration		Extension	Enhancement			Locution	Illocution	
Eksem	Ekspo	T		Pl	Pr/R				
Bruno Mars	21	2	23	-	3	-	-	-	49
Katy Perry	25	12	27	-	1	-	4	-	69
Total	46	14	50	-	4	-	4	-	118

1) Extension

Extension relation occurs when a mode adds a totally new information to the other mode(s). In this research, there are 46 data found representing the relation.

Katy Perry posted an advertisement about her ‘collection’, specifically a series for fall season. At the closing part, she embedded a woman’s boot emoji after a link for the readers to acquire the product.



The emoji added an information about the link. Without the emoji, a reader might not find it difficult to consider the purpose of the link. In this case, emoji and textual element both played a role in the structure of relational process: emoji gave a value to the textual element.

Figure 8. Extension Relation by Katy Perry

The other example is by Bruno Mars in figure 9. He announced through a Twitter post that there were only 20 Silk Sonic’s shows left. He added an information about his feeling through a sad emoji. Combined with “only 20 shows left”, the emoji had the role in the structure of mental process: feeling sad.



Figure 9. Extension Relation by Bruno Mars

2) Exemplification

One of two elaboration sub-types is exemplification. In this research, exemplification relation is realized by hyponymy relation between emoji and the text. These relations are represented in 46 data.

In figure 10, Katy Perry advertised a song by Cynthia Lovely entitled *Losing Sleep*. She added a boxout talking about what causes her and her fans losing sleep. A *Face with Spiral Eyes* emoji was embedded in the boxout, in purpose to represent losing sleep. A *Face with Spiral Eyes*, originally, means dizziness, but may also represent hypnosis or other forms of disorientation (Emoji.org). Losing sleep is a hyponym of disorientation.



Figure 10. Exemplification Relation by Katy Perry

The other example of exemplification relation is the Twitter post by Bruno Mars in figure 11. He posted a show by Silk Sonic that would be held that night in Las Vegas. There is a slot machine emoji to represent Las Vegas, having the role of hyponym to name of the city.



Figure 11. Exemplification Relation by Bruno Mars

3) Exposition

Another sub-type of elaboration is exposition. There were 13 image-text combination involving this relation. The emoji and textual elements were in the same level generality, related in synonymy.

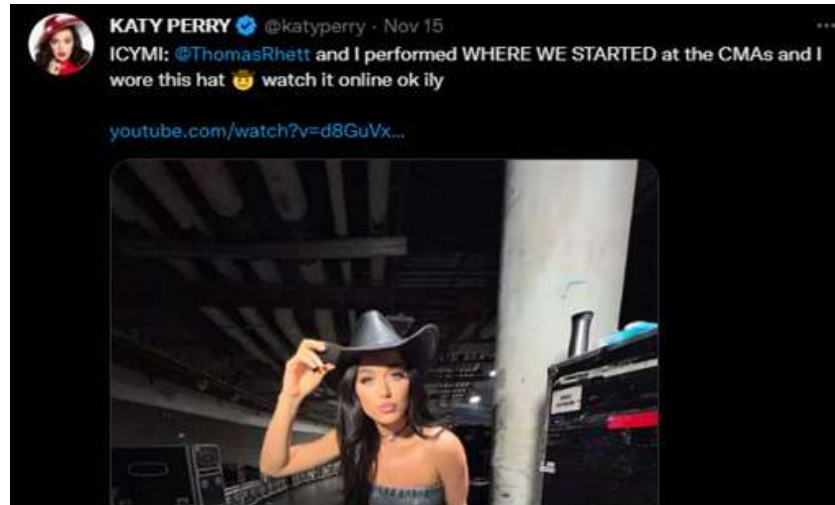


Figure 12. Exposition Relation by Katy Perry

In figure 12, Katy Perry posted about a show she would have with Thomas Rhett at the CMA Awards. She stated that she had a hat to wear in the show. A cowboy emoji was related to “I wore this hat”, the boxout part of the advertisement. The emoji was related to the whole textual element synonymously.

4) Enhancement

In this relation, “the text qualifies the image by circumstantial information or vice versa” (Martinec and Salway, 2005). The relations occurred in this research were realized with emoji worked as the circumstances: place. There were four data considered as enhancement relation.

Bruno Mars, in figure 13, combined Australia flag emoji and a link. Considering Bruno Mars as a musician and the attached picture showing him on stage, the link in the post can be recognized as the link to access his show. Furthermore, the location of the show is represented by Australian flag emoji, working as circumstantial participant.



Figure 13. Enhancement Relation by Bruno Mars

Other example is the advertisement by Katy Perry in figure 14. In the boxout, Katy talks about losing sleep. She invited her followers to write their “insomniac excuse” in the comment section. A down arrow emoji was added to point out the location of the comment section, which is below the text.



Figure 14. Enhancement Relation by Katy Perry

5) Locution

Locution was the only type of projection relation found in this research. There were four data representing locution relation. The relation was realized in verbal processes.

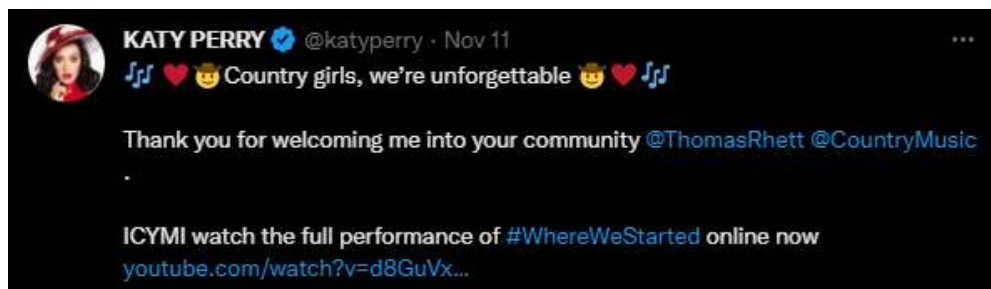


Figure 15. Locution Relation by Katy Perry

The example of locution relation is the advertisement by Katy Perry in figure 15. She combined a set of emoji, musical note and cowboy emoji, with “country girls, we’re unforgettable”. The combination was positioned in the headline. The element textual was a part of lyric of her songs entitled *California Gurls*. The combination is considered locution as the cowboy emoji represented a person singing, as the sayer in a verbal process, and the musical note emoji worked as quotation mark. “Country girls, we’re unforgettable” stood as the verbiage.

Conclusion

The emoji and textual element are mostly combined in unequal: image subordinate to text status, having similar number of data with complementary status. Emoji only relates to part(s) of the textual element and stand as the inferior mode in the process of the text. Nevertheless, independent status is unlikely to occur as the process in advertisement text results in more specific meaning than emoji. Occurrences of complementary status indicates the importance of emoji in forming wider syntagm than a multimodal syntagm in a post.

In terms of logico-semantic relation, there are several role emoji possesses in constructing the text. The musicians use emoji as hyponymy of the textual element more frequently. Emoji is positioned as representations of the textual element in more general way. Emoji is also widely used to add information beyond any process in textual element, as the realization in extension relation. The information added varies in function, such as adding feelings and intonation (Danesi, 2017; Wagner, Marusek, and Yu, 2020) as well as decoration (Pohl, Domin and Rohs, 2017). The exposition relation occurs as emoji represents textual element or, in other words, emoji and textual element combined synonymously. The textual elements represented can be a word (🍁FALL🍁), a phrase (Kitty Furry 🐱) or a clause (I wore this hat 🧢). In some cases, emoji also had the role to add circumstantial information, especially about place. This is due to the limited number of emoji providing information about time and purpose/reason which is more specific. Locution relations were realized in a set of emoji (smiley combined with musical tone emoji) embedded with a song lyric, depicting a person singing. Martinec and Salway (2005) used the context of comic strip and diagram to explain projection relation. In Twitter, those context is still impeded without attaching the picture itself. Therefore, it needs particular context to implement locution relation. In this research the particular context found is a person singing.

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