

## The Analysis of the Usage of Emojis on Instagram Account @Englishwithlucy

**Ni Putu Sri Galuh Lestari**  
*ITP Markandeya Bali*  
[srigaluhlestari@gmail.com](mailto:srigaluhlestari@gmail.com)

**Pande Agus Adiwijaya**  
*ITP Markandeya Bali*  
[adiwijayapande@gmail.com](mailto:adiwijayapande@gmail.com)

**Luh Made Dwi Wedayanthi**  
*ITP Markandeya Bali*  
[wedawid06@gmail.com](mailto:wedawid06@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** This study investigates the role of emojis in language learning on social media, with a particular focus on the Instagram account @englishwithlucy. The research aims to provide insights for educators and learners by analyzing the description, interpretation, and explanation of emoji usage. Employing a qualitative approach, the study uses Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model and collects data through documentation and netnography methods. The analysis reveals significant findings regarding the communication strategies employed by @englishwithlucy and their impact on language learners. The primary objectives were to examine the types, frequency, and integration of emojis in the account's discourse. Key findings include: 1) Emojis serve as crucial communication tools that enhance engagement and facilitate effective communication by conveying emotions and creating relatability, consistent with previous research. 2) Emojis reinforce messages and contextualize vocabulary, aiding in comprehension and retention, which aligns with existing studies. 3) The account deliberately avoids negative emojis to maintain a positive and encouraging tone, fostering a supportive learning environment, as supported by current literature. 4) Social and cultural contexts significantly influence emoji usage, with the account selecting emojis that have common interpretations across cultures to ensure clarity and inclusivity. Overall, the strategic use of emojis on @englishwithlucy not only enhances engagement and communication but also contributes to a vibrant and interactive learning environment. These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the educational significance of emojis and underscore their importance as integral components of language and communication on social media platforms.

**Keywords:** Emoji, Instagram, Qualitative Research, Critical Discourse Analysis

### INTRODUCTION

The existence of the Covid-19 pandemic has paralyzed various activities, one of which is the learning system. The government stipulates rules for carrying out online learning as one of the policies due to the impact of the pandemic which applies to both elementary, middle and tertiary school levels. Education that was originally carried

out face-to-face has switched to electronic learning (E-Learning), this must be implemented as an effort to prevent the risk of transmission of the corona virus (covid-19) (Meda, 2020) The online learning communication process is carried out by utilizing various types of communication media, lecturers or teachers can provide services without having to deal directly with

students (Sri, 2020). Learning media is something that can stimulate the attention and interest of students so that it can help achieve learning targets or goals, one of which is Instagram. The most basic reason for using Instagram as a learning medium is because students are used to using Instagram (Rusman., Deni Kurniawan., 2011). With the increasing popularity of digital communication, the use of emojis has become ubiquitous in online discourse. Emojis are visual symbols that represent emotions, attitudes, and interpersonal meanings in digital communication. They play a significant role in shaping discourse and social identity in online communication (Smith et al., 2019) Numerous surveys have indicated that emojis are widely utilized to convey emotions and thoughts. Specifically, Instagram users incorporate emojis in 48% of their text, while Facebook users utilize them in 33.5% of their communications. WhatsApp (WA) users also employ emojis as a practical and efficient visual language to express feelings and convey messages and ideas. (Kurianwan, 2018)

In the context of language learning, social media platforms like Instagram have become an essential resource for learners to practice and improve their language skills. One popular English language teacher and influencer on Instagram is Lucy Bella Simskin, known for her account *@englishwithlucy*. She provides English language learning content to a diverse global audience. In her posts, Lucy often uses emojis to enhance her message and engage with her audience. According to Hadden and Frisby (2019), the utilization of emojis can generate positive feedback that has a beneficial impact on student self-efficacy. In the realm of language learning, self-efficacy is a crucial determinant of learner performance and behavior. However, the majority of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners appear to have low self-efficacy beliefs regarding English learning. In such situations, whether in traditional face-to-face

classrooms or online environments, it is essential for teachers to comprehend how to provide effective feedback to students without undermining their self-efficacy beliefs, as emphasized by Kerksen-Griep and Witt (2014).

The urgency of analyzing the usage of emojis on the Instagram account *@englishwithlucy* using the CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) model proposed by Norman Fairclough in an educational context lies in the need to understand how emojis are employed in language learning and teaching on social media. Previous research has shown that emojis play a significant role in online communication. For example, Smith, Anderson, and Duggan (2019) found that emojis are widely used in digital communication to express emotions and facilitate communication. By analyzing the usage of emojis on *@englishwithlucy* Instagram account, this study can provide empirical evidence on how emojis are utilized in the context of English language learning on social media. The findings of this research can contribute to the understanding of the role of emojis in online communication and provide insights into their potential implications for language learning and teaching, particularly in digital language learning environments.

The hypothesis for this study is that the usage of emojis on the *@englishwithlucy* Instagram account is influenced by cultural and contextual factors and can vary in meaning and interpretation across different communities and language users. This research is relevant to the world of education as it can provide insights into how emojis can be used to enhance language learning and improve communication skills. According to Hopper and Trauth-Nare (2018), social media platforms like Instagram can provide a platform for language learners to engage in authentic communication, practice their language skills, and learn from a diverse range of perspectives. The analysis of the usage of emojis on the *@englishwithlucy*

Instagram account can contribute to our understanding of how social media can be used to facilitate language learning and improve communication skills. Based on the problems above, the researchers can formulate the problem as follows: First, what are the descriptions of the use of emojis on the Instagram account @englishwithlucy? Second, what are the interpretations of the use of emojis on the Instagram account @englishwithlucy? Third, what are the explanations of the use of emojis on the Instagram account @englishwithlucy? The purpose of this research is as follows : First, to find out the description of the usage of emojis on the Instagram account @englishwithlucy; Second, to find out the introduction of the usage of emojis on the Instagram account @englishwithlucy; Third, to find out the explanation of the usage of emojis on the Instagram account @englishwithlucy.

### RESEARCH METODOLOGY

The research design is qualitative descriptive. Qualitative descriptive research methods can be interpreted as research that produces descriptive data where the researcher is the key instrument, as well as variables that can be explained using numbers or words and conclusions cannot be used to conclude clearer terms (Adiwijaya et al., 2021). The method of collecting data in this study are Documentation and Netnography. In an ethnographic study, the sample is a small and judgemental one, opportunistically chosen in order to achieve rich data (Fielding, 2008). The collection of documentation of posts and comments posted on the Instagram account @englishwithlucy. There are two sources of data that the author will use in her research, namely primary data and secondary data. (a) Primary data is a source of data obtained from posts on the @englishwithlucy Instagram account posted by the admin. (b) Secondary data is an additional data source used by researchers. This data source relates

to theories such as text books, journals, papers, public newspapers, magazines, etc., in addition to data and supporting analysis in research.

In this study, an observational approach was employed for online research, where the researcher assumed a passive role as a reader of the site. The researcher focused on reading the captions and comments without actively participating or making any comments themselves. This approach was deliberately chosen to avoid influencing the conversations in any manner and to ensure that they remained as authentic and natural as possible. (Kozinets, 2010). Due to the aforementioned reason, the decision was made to utilize archived posts for the research. Although comments were still being added during the research period, they were included in the sample to capture a comprehensive representation of the data.

This study uses a critical discourse analysis technique using the Norman Fairclough model. In this analysis, Fairclough uses data processing and analysis techniques which he divides into three dimensions, namely: text analysis (text), analysis of discursive practice (discourse practice) and analysis of socio-cultural practice (sociocultural practice). In the first analysis stage, namely, the text analysis stage which includes both verbal analysis and images in the text. Which analysis at this stage will be presented descriptively. At the text level, the researcher analyzed the text in the discourse. The analysis can be in the form of grammatical arrangements, style of language, as well as the choice of language and emojis used by the author, without any influence from other aspects. After that the researcher will divide again based on representation, relation and identity. Analyze from clauses, combinations of clauses, and sequences between sentences. Fairclough views the text as not only showing how an object is described but also how the relationship between objects is

defined. The next stage of analysis is how the text is produced and accepted by society. Starting from who wrote or conveyed, what kind of design, and who was the recipient of the text, and this is the result of the interpretation of the researcher and the third stage is the socio-cultural stage which is the result of a dialogue between the text described and the current societal phenomena which will then be supplemented by examining the context by seeing and understanding social, cultural and situational factors at the time the discourse was made.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of emojis used on the *@englishwithlucy* Instagram account, employing the Norman Fairclough CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) model, yields significant findings that shed light on the communication strategies employed by the account. The research primarily aimed to investigate the types of emojis utilized, their frequency, and the specific ways in which they were integrated into the discourse on the account. According to Arafah and Hasyim (2019) emojis are part of the grammatical elements of language in communicating on social media. By examining the types of emojis used on *@englishwithlucy*, we gain valuable insights into the account's communication style and objectives (Logi & Zappavigna, 2021).

The analysis of the description of emoji usage on the Instagram account *@englishwithlucy* reveals valuable insights into the communication strategies employed by the account and the potential impact on language learners (Li & Yang, 2018a). Out of the 225 observed posts, 122 posts (54%) featured emojis, demonstrating that *@englishwithlucy* actively utilizes emojis as a communication tool to engage with their audience. The distribution of emojis across different categories was varied, with smileys being the most prevalent category (32%), followed by symbols (18%), nature

(13%), and food and drink (9%). The results revealed that *@englishwithlucy* predominantly utilizes emojis from the Smileys category. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Kejriwal et al (2021) This diverse distribution showcases the versatility and creative expression employed by *@englishwithlucy* in using emojis to facilitate language learning through visual elements. The analysis identified 52 unique emojis used in *@englishwithlucy*'s posts, each with its own distinct meaning and function within the context of the posts. Categorizing emojis by type enabled a deeper understanding of *@englishwithlucy*'s purpose and usage. *@englishwithlucy* made a conscious decision to avoid using emojis associated with negative emotions, such as disgust, anger, disapproval, rage, and sadness (Vareberg et al., 2022). This deliberate choice aimed to maintain a positive and uplifting tone in their posts, creating a safe and encouraging space for language learners (Chen & Hsu, 2022). By avoiding emojis that may evoke negative feelings, *@englishwithlucy* ensures that their content remains inclusive, supportive, and conducive to a positive learning experience (Bai et al., 2019). In educational posts, emojis were strategically incorporated as visual aids to complement textual content, convey meaning, and reinforce key concepts. These emojis played a crucial role in capturing learners' attention, facilitating comprehension, and aiding information retention. By integrating emojis into her educational content, *@englishwithlucy* effectively enhanced engagement and made the learning experience more interactive and enjoyable for *@englishwithlucy*'s audience. According to Glennw (2019), strategies that incorporate emoji can motivate learners, trigger emotional connections, increase comprehension, deliver content more quickly, and aid in information retention. Students are eager to use emojis as part of students' socialization strategies in online language learning, and



positive feedback through embedded emojis in online courses can significantly increase EFL learners' self-efficacy beliefs in learning English, as stated in Chen & Hsu (2022). Emojis serve as socio-emotional cues that benefit students' views of instructors and ease message interpretation, as mentioned in (Vareberg et al., 2022)

The interpretation of emojis in the context of *@englishwithlucy's* Instagram posts serves multiple purposes. Firstly, emojis are used to express a wide range of emotions and enhance the overall message. By strategically incorporating emojis, Lucy effectively conveys her emotions, adds humor, and creates a sense of playfulness and relatability for her audience. Emojis play a crucial role in expressing emotions, providing a visual representation of various feelings and allowing Lucy to connect with her audience on a deeper level. This adds a visual element to her posts and helps her followers understand the tone of her message. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Hew (2019), Purnomo (2018), and Maulidina & Prabowo (2021), which emphasize that emojis are employed to express specific emotions and add nuance to online communication. By consistently using smiley emojis, *@englishwithlucy* aims to create a positive and friendly environment for their followers.

Moreover, emojis serve as message reinforcement tools, enhancing the understanding and impact of specific vocabulary or phrases. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Hew (2019), Purnomo (2018), and Maulidina & Prabowo (2021). According to Harshdeep (2017), emojis can be used to express a range of emotions and conversational tones which are difficult to achieve with words alone. In addition, Li and Yang (2018b) suggests that emojis have pragmatic functions in internet-based communication. A corpus-based study identified the use of emojis in socio-emotional communication settings. The research also discovered that

emojis can convey more nuanced meaning than just words alone. Moreover, emojis can be used to reinforce key concepts and aid in information retention, as discussed in (Bai et al., 2019). By associating emojis with particular words or expressions, Lucy provides visual cues that reinforce their meanings. The strategic integration of emojis contributes to the overall success of *@englishwithlucy* in connecting with and educating her followers.

Additionally, emojis play a role in providing additional information and context in *@englishwithlucy's* communication. According to Shah & Tewari (2021), emojis perform both verbal and non-verbal functions in communication and can provide visual and aural cues that are missing in text-based communication. In addition, Ling and Yang (2018a) states that emojis are efficient tools in online interaction, and they contain nonverbal information that can be used to indicate affective states and emotions. Emojis can also convey more nuanced meaning than just words alone, as mentioned in (Persson, 2018). Moreover, Kejriwal et al (2021) suggests that emoji usage varies across languages, indicating that emojis can provide additional cultural context to communication. Therefore, using emojis in educational posts can help provide additional information and context to reinforce key concepts and aid in information retention. For example, an emoji can be used to indicate a specific emotion or tone that is difficult to convey through words alone. Emojis are used to indicate the difficulty level of language tests or topics, promote upcoming programs or courses, and aid comprehension in posts related to specific topics. Emojis serve as visual cues that grab attention, entice individuals to engage, and facilitate understanding, particularly for visual learners or those still developing their English skills.

The explanation of *@englishwithlucy's* use of emojis reveals

two key findings. Firstly, in the context of *@englishwithlucy*, emojis serve as powerful tools for expressing and conveying emotions effectively. According to Li and Yang (2018a), emojis were originally designed as an indicator of affective states and emotions and contain nonverbal information that is useful for expressing emotions. By strategically incorporating emojis that reflect a wide range of emotions, *@englishwithlucy* creates an engaging and interactive experience for audience. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Hew (2019), Purnomo (2018), and Maulidina & Prabowo (2021) states that emojis are employed to express specific emotions and add nuance to online communication. Emojis are leveraged to enhance the emotional experience of taking language tests, celebrate language achievements, and infuse humor and light-heartedness into their content. Through the use of emojis, *@englishwithlucy* fosters a positive and supportive environment, making language learning a more enjoyable and enriching journey for her followers.

The use of emojis by *@englishwithlucy* is influenced by social and cultural factors. According to Guntuku et al (2019) cultural differences in emoji usage across different regions can exist due to linguistic differences in expressing emotions and diversity in conceptualizing topics. For example, the ways emojis are used in the East and the West reveal recognizable normative and culture-specific patterns. *@englishwithlucy* uses emojis that have a common or same interpretation across different cultures to ensure that her message is understood by everyone (Frantzen, 2019). It is important to be mindful of cultural context when using emojis, as they can have different meanings in different cultures. While the findings of this analysis differ from previous research studies in terms of focus and context, the emoji usage in *@englishwithlucy* demonstrate the unique application of

emojis in educational content. By employing emojis as visual cues and emotional indicators, *@englishwithlucy* effectively captures the attention of followers, creates a welcoming learning environment, and encourages active participation. The subjective interpretation of emojis within the educational context highlights the dynamic nature of emoji usage and the importance of considering the audience's understanding and cultural background.

Overall, the analysis of the usage of emojis on the Instagram account *@englishwithlucy* reveals that emojis play a vital role in enhancing engagement, facilitating effective communication, and creating a vibrant and interactive learning environment. The interpretation of emojis in *@englishwithlucy*'s posts enhances engagement, expresses emotions, reinforces messages, and conveys additional information. The strategic selection and usage of emojis reflect their commitment to fostering positive emotions, inclusivity, and the joy of language acquisition. Additionally, the cultural and social context influences the interpretation and usage of emojis. By effectively leveraging emojis, *@englishwithlucy* creates an engaging and enjoyable learning experience for their followers, contributing to the overall success of their language learning platform. This research highlights the significance of emojis in educational settings and underscores their potential as powerful tools for fostering connection, conveying emotions, and reinforcing message content in the evolving landscape of digital communication.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the usage of emojis on the *@englishwithlucy* Instagram account has yielded significant findings that shed light on the communication strategies employed by the account and their impact on language learners. The research primarily aimed to investigate the types of

emojis utilized, their frequency, and the specific ways in which they were integrated into the discourse on the account. The analysis of *@englishwithlucy*'s emoji usage has provided the following key conclusions:

1) Emojis as Communication Tools:

The findings demonstrate that emojis play a vital role in enhancing engagement and facilitating effective communication on *@englishwithlucy*. By strategically incorporating emojis, the account effectively conveys emotions, adds humor, and creates a sense of playfulness and relatability for their audience. The use of emojis enhances the overall message by providing a visual representation of various feelings and allowing *@englishwithlucy* to connect with their audience on a deeper level. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Hew (2019), Purnomo (2018), and Maulidina & Prabowo (2021), which emphasize that emojis are employed to express specific emotions and add nuance to online communication.

2) Message Reinforcement and Contextualization:

The analysis reveals that emojis serve as message reinforcement tools, enhancing the understanding and impact of specific vocabulary or phrases. By associating emojis with particular words or expressions, *@englishwithlucy* provides visual cues that reinforce their meanings. This strategic integration of emojis contributes to the overall success of *@englishwithlucy* in connecting with and educating their followers. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Hew (2019), Purnomo (2018), Maulidina & Prabowo (2021), Harshdeep (2017), and Li and Yang (2018b), which highlight that emojis can convey

more nuanced meaning than words alone and can be used to reinforce key concepts and aid in information retention.

3) Positive Tone and Emotional Experience:

*@englishwithlucy* made a conscious decision to avoid using emojis associated with negative emotions, such as disgust, anger, disapproval, rage, and sadness. This deliberate choice aims to maintain a positive and uplifting tone in their posts, creating a safe and encouraging space for language learners. By consistently using smiley emojis, *@englishwithlucy* aims to create a positive and friendly environment for their followers. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Vareberg (2023) and Bai (2019), which emphasize that the avoidance of negative emojis contributes to the creation of a positive learning experience and fosters learners' self-efficacy beliefs in learning English.

4) Cultural and Social Context:

The analysis of *@englishwithlucy*'s emoji usage highlights the influence of social and cultural factors. Emojis can have different meanings in different cultures, and *@englishwithlucy* takes this into account by using emojis that have a common interpretation across different cultures to ensure that her message is understood by everyone. This finding aligns with previous research by Guntuku (2019) and Frantzen (2019), which suggest that cultural differences in emoji usage exist due to linguistic differences in expressing emotions and diversity in conceptualizing topics. Considering cultural context is crucial when using emojis to ensure effective communication.

selection and usage of emojis reflect @englishwithlucy's commitment to fostering positive emotions, inclusivity, and the joy of language acquisition. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the significance of emojis in educational settings and emphasize the importance of considering emojis as integral components of language and communication on social media platforms.

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