

# The Use of the ‘Face with Tears of Joy’ Emoji on WhatsApp: A Conversation-Analytical Approach

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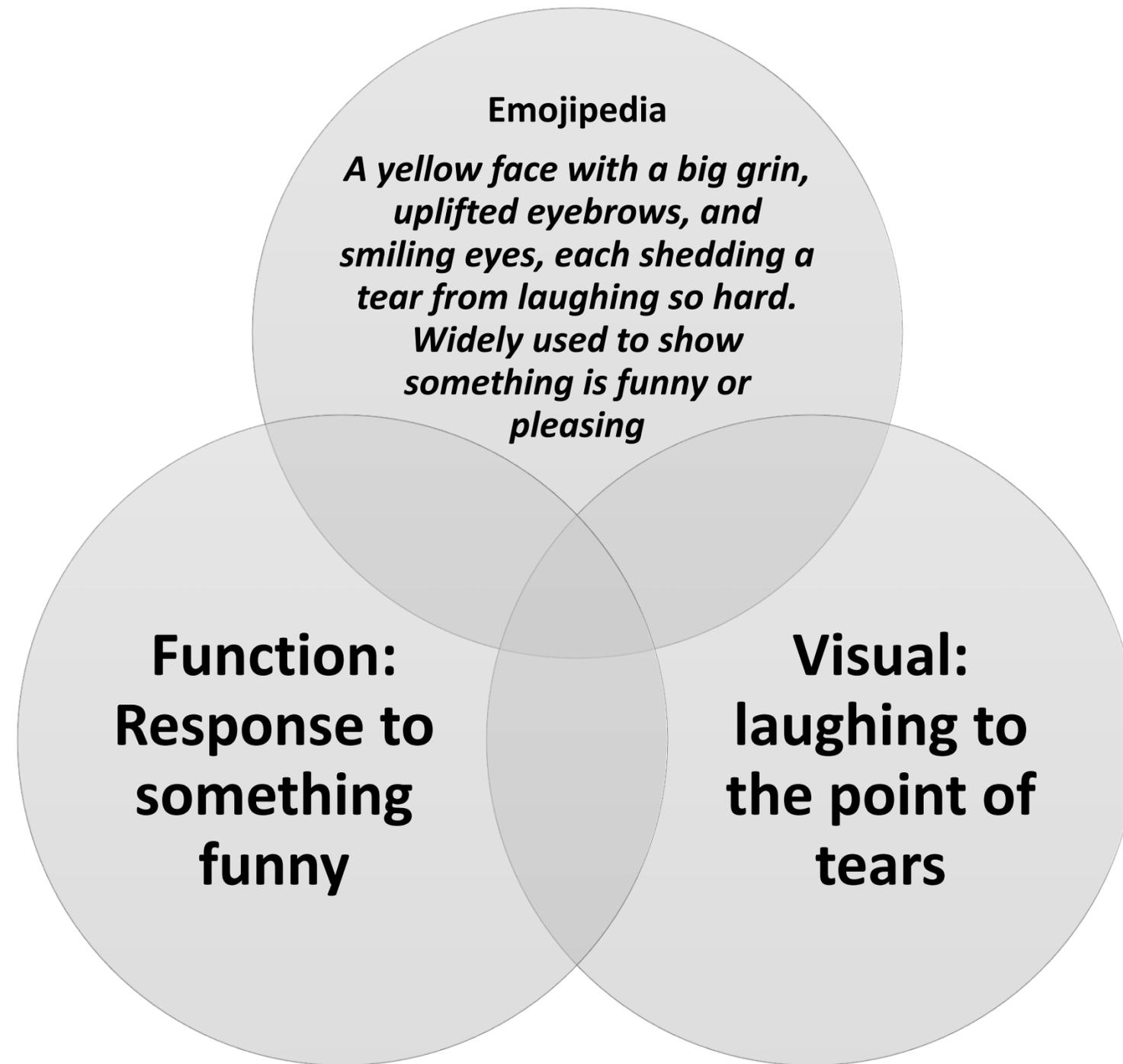
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Is  used as laughter in  
face-to-face (f2f)  
interaction?

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# Face with tears of joy



# Laughter F2F

KEY TOPIC IN CONVERSATION  
ANALYSIS (CA)

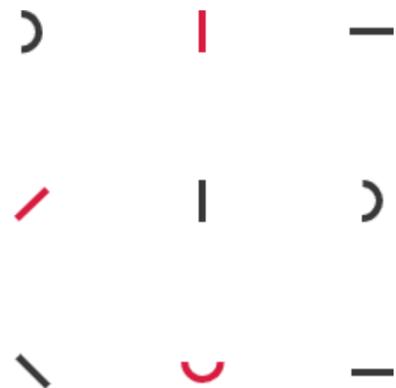
MAIN FINDINGS

- Main functions of laughter
  - ~~Reacting to something funny~~
  - Inviting to laugh
  - Signaling the humorous referent
  - Remediating offence or trouble telling
  - Regulating emotions collectively
- Responses to laughter
  - Accept (laughing or silence)
  - Reject (speaking)
- Specific placement of laugh units



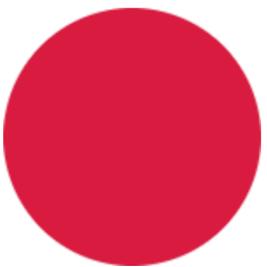
# Laughing emojis

FEW STUDIES ANALYZE EMOJIS USING (CA)



## LAUGHING EMOJIS AND CA

- Flinkfeld (2014): smileys and laugh particles (such as hahaha) signal the humorous stance and help managing sensitive matters.
- Gibson, Huang, and Yu (2018): ‘face-covering hand’ on WeChat similar to laughter in Chinese culture.
- König (2019): emojis make the laughter stance explicit, laugh particles convey laughter





# Data



## CORPUS

50 dyadic WhatsApp chats

## PARTICIPANTS

120 subjects, aged 16-65 (42 males, 77 females, 1 other)

## CONTEXT

Family members,  
acquaintances, friends,  
classmates

## ETHICS

Pseudonyms, omission of personal details,  
informed consent



## STEP 0

Finding all  
conversations with  
the emoji 🤔



## STEP 1

Finding patterns of  
use

(Petitjean and Morel,  
2017)



## STEP 2

Analyzing the patterns  
using CA

(Glenn 1989 ; Provine 1993;  
Jefferson, Sacks, and  
Schegloff 1977)

# Method

# Results

Step 0

## NUMBER

Face with tears of joy  
appears 194 times (64  
messages, 36  
conversations)

## USE

Second most  
used emoji in the  
corpus after 'face  
throwing a kiss'



# Results

## Step 1

POSITION	NUMBER OF 😊	MESSAGES WITH 😊
Alone	116 (60%)	31 (49%)
Final	61 (31%)	25 (38%)
Middle	13 (7%)	5 (8%)
Opening	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Sequence	3 (2%)	2 (2%)
Total	194 (100%)	65 (100)

😊 was generally standing alone (i.e., the message was composed only of this emoji) or placed at the end of the message (final position).

It was usually repeated once (22 messages, 34%), twice (13 messages, 20%), to a lesser extent 3-4 times (8 messages, 12%)

# Results

## Step 1

Repetitions	Position					Tot.
	alone	final	middle	opening	sequence	
1	6 (9%)	11 (17%)	3 (5%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	22 (34%)
2	4 (6%)	8 (12%)	0%	0%	1 (2%)	13 (20%)
3	6 (9%)	2 (3%)	0%	0%	0%	8 (12%)
4	6 (9%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	0%	0%	8 (12%)
5	3 (5%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	3 (5%)
6	5 (8%)	0%	1 (2%)	0%	0%	6 (9%)
7	1 (2%)	2 (3%)	0%	0%	0%	3 (5%)
8	1 (2%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	3 (2%)
10	0%	1 (2%)	0%	0%	0%	3 (2%)
Tot.	32 (49%)	25 (38%)	5 (8%)	1 (2%)	2 (3%)	100%

# Results

## Step 2

### FIRST PATTERN

When 'face with tears of joy' is placed at the end of a message (repeated once or twice), it usually fulfils the function of signaling the 'laughable.'

### EXAMPLE 1

1. L: *Today you have a guest again* 😄
  2. L: *Manu's gone to look for him*
  3. S: 👍
  - 4. S: *What they don't know is that tomorrow at a quarter to eight there will be church bells ringing to the max* 😄
- [...]

# Results

Step 2

## SECOND PATTERN

When standing alone 😂 is repeated and it is used to accept the invitation to laugh

## EXAMPLE 1

1. L: *Today you have a guest again* 😂
  2. L: *Manu's gone to look for him*
  3. S: 👍
  4. S: *What they don't know is that tomorrow at a quarter to eight there will be church bells ringing to the max* 😂
- 5: L: 😂 😂 😂  
[...]

# Results

## Step 2

### SECOND PATTERN

Sequences of 😄 can be used to close short humorous conversations

### EXAMPLE 2

*1. E: Hey, hey, hey.*

*2. E: If you've got a hunch about the Christmas lottery number, please tell me*

→ 3. J: 😄😄😄😄

[end of the conversation]

# Discussion

## RESPONSE TO RQ1

 is placed at the end of the message or standing alone. These two positions correspond to two different functions.

## RESPONSE TO RQ2

 in the final position is used to signal humor

## RESPONSE TO RQ3

Several  standing alone and repeated multiple times mirror laughter in response to humor.

# Limitations

## LIMITATIONS

- Only dyadic WhatsApp chats
- Reduced corpus (adequate for digital CA)
- Socio-demographic factors not considered
- Type of humor not considered
- Old corpus
- 🤖

## FUTURE STUDIES

- Group chats
- Considering age and gender
- Responses to different humorous stances
- Other phenomena studies by CA

# Applications

## NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING

Testing the patterns in other platforms and train an automatic classifier.

## HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION

Improving chatbot conversations, by convincingly simulating a human's use of emojis to signal or respond to humorous remarks.

## SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Creating more authentic posts to interact with customers.

# Thank you

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