

Autotext Emoticons as A Message Carrier in Blackberry

Fadia Anugrah Tuesa
English Language and Literature
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
fadiaanugrah@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper entitled “Autotext Emoticon as Message Carrier in Blackberry” is aimed to investigate the meaning and the function of the Eastern emoticons used in Blackberry Messenger and to discover the differences between male and female in using emoticons. The study is qualitative which utilizes Eco’s (1994) Hermetic drift theory. The main data are 10 emoticons which were used in ten different conversations in Blackberry messenger. There are 15 conversations which consist of five conversations between male and female, five conversations between female and female, and five conversations between male and male. The study revealed that the emoticons function to i) represent feelings, 2) strengthen messages, and 3) joke around. It also revealed that females become more expressive than males in using emoticons in a conversation between female and female. To some extent, males are the opposite, males become less expressive in using emoticons between male and male. However, males are like females in expressing their feelings so that they appear as expressive as females in the conversation between female and male.

Keywords: *Semiotic, Eastern Emoticons, Autotext Emoticons, Gender contribution, Blackberry*

INTRODUCTION

According to Umberto Eco (1976), semiotics is about anything which can be taken as a sign or anything which relates with it. Semiotics does not only involve what people refer to as “signs” in everyday speech, but it can be anything else which ‘represents’ something else (Chandler D. , 2007).

For semiotics, the development of technology serve as a trigger for scholars to develop this study because many kinds of symbols appear through the media, especially in media phone and Internet whose symbols are in the form of emoticons.

One of the technologies that uses emoticons as an alternative for the user to convey the message is Blackberry Smartphone. Blackberry is one of the devices produced by Research In Motion which now has changed its name into Blackberry Company in Canada. Many people especially teenagers are using the device to communicate with others. In addition to Research In Motion, other companies which also produce smart

phone devices are Samsung, Nokia, HTC, and Apple. The existence of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and many other social networks provide reasons why many people are using smart phones. One of the reasons is because as a phone, it is an excellent device to use. Smartphone users communicate through it, and they are able to share music, videos, photos, and instant messaging.

In smartphones, the available emoticons are different from non-smartphone devices. The emoticons are constructed by many punctuation marks and represent the movement with facial expressions rather than only facial expressions which yahoo messenger has.

Emoticon is the representation of an expression conveyed by people who use punctuation marks in a formed order (Ptaszynski, Rzepka, Araki, & Momouchi, 2011). The emoticon was discovered by Scott Fahlman, a computer scientist at Carnegie Mellon University, in 1982. Ptaszynski, Rzepka, Araki, and Momouchi (2011) explain that

emoticons are representations of body language in text based messages, where the communication channel is limited to transmission of letters and punctuation marks.

As cited in Derks (2007), Ekmen and Fresen (1969) state that the basic function of nonverbal cues in F2F communication is to provide information, control social interaction, and express intimacy. Apart from using a verbal part of a message, using emoticons is one of the ways to express feelings.

Some research studies regarding the use of emoticon in online communication have been conducted by Ptaszynki (2011), Wolf (2000), Schoebelen (2012), Derks (2007), and Sallo (2011). Ptaszynki (2011) conducted an analysis on the effects of emoticons in social interaction. She discovered that the use of emoticons really helps the users convey their emotion or expression during online communication. The result of the study shows that emoticons often appear in online conversation and are necessary for the communication to take place.

Wolf (2000) also conducted a study about emoticons. However, she did not only concern on the emoticons, she also involved gender. She investigated the different uses of emoticons between males and females in certain newsgroup cites in internet. She tried to find whether men are more expressive than women in using emoticons or inversely. The result of the study shows that woman is more emotional than man. When both genders (female and male) appear on a same-gender newsgroup, woman comes more expressive than man. When women were communicating on their same gender newsgroups, they came more emotional, but the opposite occurred for man. When men were communicating on their same gender newsgroup, men came less emotional. On the mixed gender newsgroups, the difference was not statistically significant. It appears that men follow the way women express their feelings so that the emoticons used are not different. It makes men to be as expressive as women.

Schoebelen (2012) investigated

the use of emoticon in Twitter, particularly emoticon which involves noses “:-)” and non-used noses “:)”. The result of the study reveals that noses in emoticon do not give essential contribution. Twitter users who use noses and non-noses were differentiated because Schoebelen (2012) sees that that noses and non-noses emoticon have different effects or meanings. Yet, the finding also shows that the use of used and non-used noses emoticon always concerns who and when. It means that people will use noses in the emoticons if they think they should and it is the same when they think they should not.

Derks (2007) examined the role of emoticons on online message interpretation. The study was conducted because according to Walther and D’Addario (2001), the meaning of emoticon is not endless. The study conducted by Walther (2001) reveals that emoticons are useful to stress the message intensity. Derks (2007), by contrast, does not agree with Walther (2001) who also concludes that emoticons can make

messages to be more powerful in meaning and do not have fervency to enhance messages. Derks (2007) discovers that emoticons actually have certain effects on message interpretation. The interpretation of the message is examined to discover the motives for emoticon use (Derks., 2007), which include “expressing emotion”, “strengthening the message”, “regulating the interaction”, and “putting into perspective.”

Another study on emoticons was conducted by Sallo (2011). His study entitled “The Faces of Messenger Emoticons in the Virtual Communication” focuses on the role of emoticons in online conversations such as Yahoo Messenger. The result of the study confirms that emoticons in Yahoo Messenger are necessary as complements in many conversations. The emoticons are also known because of their interesting visual forms. Sallo (2011) states the emoticons which express positive meanings are popular between the other animated emoticons.

METHODOLOGY

This study concerns on the use of emoticons especially their meanings and functions. Hermetic theory proposed by Eco (1994) is used as a tool of analysis of this study. This is because the theory mainly focuses on the meaning of a symbol which does not only have one meaning, but two or more if the symbol is put in a different context of conversation. Eco (1994) proposed Hermetic drift to discover the meaning that the emoticons have.

The selected emoticons were described by C₁, C₂, and C₃. Therefore, C₁ represents the first Content or literal meaning of the sign. C₂ or the Second Content represents a connotation which comes from the Expression (E₁) plus the first Content (C₁). The last is C₃ or the Third Content which represents the meaning of the sign according to a context given.

The data were the Auto-text Emoticons which appeared in Blackberry Messenger at Blackberry Devices. The emoticons were mostly included in Eastern types of

emoticons. The study focused on the conversation of the users in Blackberry Messenger and the emoticons used. Since not all of the emoticons were used in Blackberry Messenger, there were ten emoticons. Each emoticon was used by the users in different contexts of conversation and it could also lead to different meanings of emoticons. The users' conversations between two persons were taken as pictures.

The selected emoticons were found from several sites on Internet and in Blackberry devices themselves by adding the emoticons into Blackberry's Auto-text feature. The adding process of the emoticons to the Blackberry's Auto-text feature was done by copying selected emoticons and adding them to the feature. As it is an Auto-text feature, the users must use some 'keyword' in change to the emoticons they would use, for example, emoticon “(‘\`□)‘””“┌——┐” can use word “angry” or “annoy” or probably “ary” for shorter typing. The users may write

any word they want to use to replace the emoticons as the keywords made by the users are not restricted. The shorter word they use to replace the emoticons, the faster they send the message to the receiver.

To discover if there is any difference between males and females in using emoticons on the messenger, 15 full conversations from Blackberry Messenger were collected. There were five male to male conversations, five female to female conversations, and five male to female conversations. The emoticons involved in the conversations were calculated and the amount would be used to discover the differences.

The selected emoticons were in the form of punctuation words ordered

and the conversations were taken in the form of GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) since the results of screen captured of the conversations are in the form of pictures.

Furthermore, the emoticons were analyzed through Eco's hermetic drift to unpack the meaning behind the emoticons and the function of emoticons.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to five emoticons which were analyzed in this study, there are three functions of the emoticons, i) to stress statements, ii) as a joke, and iii) to represent feelings.

The following table is the classification of the emoticon used and its function.

Table 1 Classification table of Emoticon and its function

| No | Emoticon | Function | Context |
|----|------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | (^-l^-)(^-^-)-σ• | Strengthening statements | Aninda's representation to ignore Bayu's message |
| 2 | l(˘-˘)l l(˘-˘)l | Feelings Representation | Represent Adriyana's happy feeling when she knew her goods would |

| | | | |
|---|----------------|--|--|
| | ☹ | | be coming |
| 3 | (\`д)/☹)° 3°) | Joking | The emoticon used by Maria to express his angry feeling in a joking way.because of being mocked by her friend Anugrah. |
| 4 | (#☹)9 | Strengthening or Supporting statements | Sadam used the emoticon to support his message “jangan menyerah, to stress that he support Widya in a serious way. |
| 5 | (;~;)\(☹) | Feelings representation and Strengthening statements | Show Handian’s feeling of pity and stress that he really was sorry for what happened to Intan |

1) Stressing or Strengthening Statements


There are two out of five emoticons which function to strengthen the messages. The conversation between Aninda and Bayu may be the example.

Emoticon 1



The conversation above was transcribed and translated into English as below:

- Bayu : ☹

Sedih ih
 I'm sad

- Aninda: Sedih dari
 Hongkong?
 Do you expect
 me to believe it?

Palsu gitu
 sedihnya!
 You're faking it



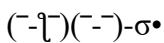

From the conversation, Bayu was telling that he felt sad over something. The first emoticon of  used by Bayu told Aninda that he was annoyed by something. The message “sedih ih” or “I’m sad” in English was sent by him again after the crying emoticon  to tell

Table 2 Analysis on emoticon 1

| E ₁ | C ₁ | C ₂ | C ₃ |
|---|---|---------------------|---|
|  | Visual: A person is picking a nose and throw the dirt away | Represent a grabber | Emphasize that the user does not believe for what have happened and ignore it |

Aninda that he was also feeling sad . However, Aninda who knew that he was faking his sadness, laughed at his utterance instead.

Aninda said “Sedih dari hongkong” to reply Bayu’s message. “Sedih dari hongkong” means that Aninda did not believe that Bayu was sad. The emoticon  which represents a person who is picking a nose means something out of context. As Hermetic drift’s Eco (1994) deals with a symbol in certain context, then the emoticon was analyzed in the following table.

The emoticon above was analyzed based on such components as E₁, C₁, C₂, and C₃. E₁ represents an Expression or Sign. C₁ represents the first Content or literal meaning of the sign. C₂ or the Second Content represents a connotation which comes from the Expression (E₁) plus the first Content (C₁). The last is C₃ or the Third Content which represents the meaning of the sign according to a context given.

In the E₁ column, the emoticon of (-[̂])(-)-σ• was used and it visualizes a person who was picking a nose and is throwing it. The “reverse ash symbol” or [̂] in the emoticon (-[̂]) represents a hand which is picking dirt on nose. While the next emoticon (-)-σ• is the next emoticon after the first one who portrays a person who throws dirt from the nose.

In column C₂, it is said that the emoticon portrays a grabber as a person who picks nose is considered to be dirty, especially when someone throws it anywhere.

In the C₃ which contains a connotation of the emoticon based on context, the emoticon explains that the emoticon user or Aninda did not believe that Bayu was sad and so she ignored the message. The emoticon was used to show that the user of this emoticon was responding to her friend’s saying “sedih ih” and ignore it by saying “sedih dari hongkong”. The emoticon (-[̂])(-)-σ• is used to emphasize that she really did not believe that Bayu was sad.

As her further response to Bayu’s messages, Aninda thought that it was a funny message from Bayu. Aninda again replied with “palsu gitu sedihnya” and used emoticon (̂▽̂)-σ as a reflection that she also laughed and already knew that Bayu was faking his sadness.

The emoticon which is used to strengthen the message is also reflected in the conversation 2 below between Sadam and Widya.

Emoticon 2



Some messages above were transcribed and translated as below:

- Widya : Ngeledek aja dasar!
Hhu
(you're always making fun of me!
Hhu)
- Sadam : Makan mulu lagian
(that's because you eat every
second)
- Udah ada panggilan – panggilan
lagi Wi?
(Any jobs interview for you Wi?)
- Widya : Belum pah euy..
(Not yet dad..)
- Masih jobfair – jobfairan aja
sekarang
(I'm still looking for it by going to
some job fairs)
- Sadam : Ya sudah, jangan
menyerah!
(ok, don't give up)

The conversation about the job interview that was started by Sadam

who asked “udah ada panggilan2 lagi Wi?”, indicates that he asked if Widya had had a call for an interview. Widya replied with “belum pah euy” or “not yet dad..” which told that she had not had any new job interview. “pah” or “dad” does not mean that they are father and daughter, but it shows how close they are as if the communication was between a father and his daughter.

The message “Masih jobfair2an aja skr” shows that she was still looking for a job in job fairs. Responding to what Widya had said, Sadam gave her a full support by saying “Ya sudah, jangan menyerah!” The message is also followed by an emoticon (#'—')9 which portrays a person who is lifting one hand. Giving his/her fist up as a sign to support someone.

The following table contains an analysis of the emoticon (#'—')9 to discover the meaning and the function of the emoticon. By using Eco's hermetic drift, E₁ represents an Expression or Sign. C₁ represents the first Content or literal meaning of the

sign. C₂ or the Second Content represents a connotation which comes from the Expression (E₁) plus the first Content (C₁). The last is C₃ or the

Third Content which represents the meaning of the sign according to a context given.

Table 3 analysis on emoticon 2

| E ₁ | C ₁ | C ₂ | C ₃ |
|----------------|--|------------------------|--|
| (#'—')9 | Visual: An emoticon which represent a person who is lifting one hand. Giving his/her fist up as a sign to support someone. | Don't give up emoticon | Giving support to a friend, not to give to get a job |

In C₁ column, the emoticon portrays a person who is lifting one hand or giving his or her fist up as a sign to support someone. When people are trying to give support to other people, they usually use their hand to show that they are giving an honest support to other.

In the C₂ column, the emoticon can also be considered as a “don't give

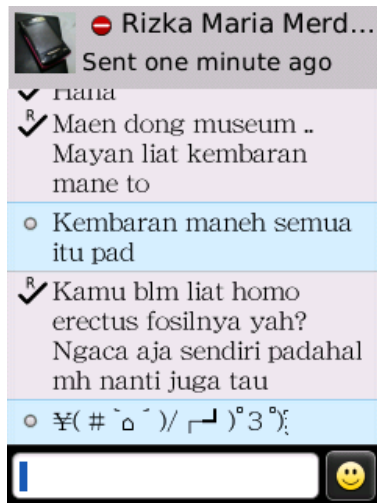
up” emoticon. A messenger user can use this emoticon when he/she wants to convey a supportive message as Sadam did to Widya. In the conversation, it can be seen why Sadam gave this kind emoticon to Widya.

After the last message sent by Sadam, which is “Ya sudah, jangan menyerah”, he put the emoticon of

(#~')9. As explained in C3 column, the emoticon was meant to be a supportive action which represents Sadam's will to emphasize that he really supported Widya to find a job.

2) As a joke

The use of emoticon is not merely for stressing a statement. There is one person out of five in the conversation who used emoticons to joke around. Here is the conversation where Maria used the emoticon to joke.



Some messages were transcribed and translated as below.

- Anugrah : haha maen ke museum dong, lumayan liat kembaran kamu (haha come here to the museum, you may see your twin here.)
- Maria : Kembaran maneh semua itu (They are all your twin)
- Anugrah : Kamu belum liat homo erectus fosilnya yah? Ngaca Aja sendiri padahal mh nanti juga tau (You must not have seen the fossil of Homo erectus, must you? Just see the mirror and you'll see it)

In the conversation above, they talked about museum and the collections inside. An emoticon was used by Maria in the last of the conversation and the emoticon was analyzed in the following table;

In the conversation above, Maria used an emoticon (\ `π')/┌┐)° 3°). It was analyzed using Eco's hermetic drift and represented in the following table.

Table 4 Analysis on emoticon 3

| E ₁ | C ₁ | C ₂ | C ₃ |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| (\ `д´) / 𠂆) ° 3 °) | Visual: A person is kicking other person. Kick: to hit someone or something with the foot, or to move the feet and legs suddenly and violently | An angry feeling or portrays a bad person | Express the speaker angry or annoyed feeling in a joking way |

The emoticon used by Maria portrays a person who is kicking somebody and the person who is being kicked shows the effect of the kick, like somebody being kicked in the real life. In the C₁ column, it explains that to kick, according to oxford dictionary (2008) means “to hit someone or something with the foot, or to move the feet and legs suddenly and violently”.

In the column of C₂, the emoticon connotes a feeling of angry or annoyed. When someone kicks another, it can be seen that a person who kicks is feeling angry.

However, C₃ explains that even though the emoticon represents a

feeling of angry, the user of the emoticon was not seriously angry to another speaker. The explanation is supported by the statements before the emoticon. The statement “haha. Maen dong ke museum to, mayan liat kembaran kamu” shows that Anugrah asked Maria to come to the museum but with a little mocking message.

The second speaker or Maria replied with “kembaran mane semua itu pad” as a denial that the museum’s collections are identical with her. “Kamu juga belum liat homo erectus yah? Ngaca aja sendiri nanti juga tahu” contains another mocking message which was sent by Anugrah and it made Maria angry and used the emoticon. However, that kind of

conversation was not a serious talk considering that both of them know each other well. It can be seen at the first statement “maen dong ke museum”. It indicates that Anugrah asked the second speaker or Maria to come to museum and it is a good.

Ip (2002) conducted a study concerning emoticons and discovered that a smiling or happy emoticon enhances the positivity in some conversation and negative one increased the negativity in conversation. However, in the Maria’s conversation, even though the emoticons could mean negative, it did not create negativity in the conversation. The meaning of the emoticons belongs to the context. The conversation between Maria and Anugrah was not a serious talk instead of a random talk where they could joke around in it.

3) Feeling representation

Beside those two functions which are mentioned above, the emoticon is also used to represent the speakers’

feeling. From the conversation above, there are two emoticons which function as Feelings representation. Nui is one of the two people who used emoticons to represent her feeling. She used the kissing emoticon (´)3ε(´) to Merigantini to show that she loves Merigantini for being kind after a sharing session they both had back then.

Emoticon 4



The conversation above was transcribed and translated into English as below.

- Merigantini: Udah ngantuk juga nih..
(I feel sleepy too)
- Nui : Iya nanti cayanks
(ok soon baby)

- Merigantini : *hug emoticon* (Night sister)
 - Nui : Thanks Sharingnyah (Thank you for sharing)
 - Merigantini: Macama bebi (Welcome baby)
 - Nui : Night sistah
- Merigantini :Nitenite
- From the conversation above, the emoticon (') 3 ε (') used by Nui after the message “night sistah” and “nitenite” was analyzed as follows.

Table 5 Analysis on emoticon 4

| E ₁ | C ₁ | C ₂ | C ₃ |
|-----------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| (') 3 ε (') | <p>Visual: Two emoticons portrays two person who are kissing.</p> <p>Kiss: to touch with your lips, especially as a greeting, or to press your mouth onto another person's mouth in a sexual way</p> | Expressing love to others | Expressing love others and indicates that the first speaker and second speaker have a really good relationship |

In C₁ column, it explains that the emoticon portrays two persons who are kissing each other through their lips.

In C₂, the emoticon can connote an expression of love. It is

used as a medium by someone to express her or his feeling to their beloved one. However, if the emoticon is put in the conversation between two persons, another interpretation would be seen.

The reason why the emoticon (')3 ε(`) was chosen to be analyzed is explained in C₃. The conversation above is between two persons, but both of them are girls. For the emoticon like (')3 ε(`) which portrays two kissing persons is supposed to be in a conversation between a couple, but in the conversation above, it happens between two girls. Although it is between two girls, it does not mean that they are lesbians. The message “night sistah” by Merigantini just indicates that they both are best friends. The word “sistah” means “sister”.

The strong relationship between them is also strengthened by the emoticons they used. Since both of them are not having a “special” relationship but just friends, the emoticon represents a big love from Nui to Merigantini for having a sharing session before sleeping.

The second emoticon which was used to represent the user’s feeling is the emoticon (; ~ ~ ;) \ (^ ^) . The

emoticon was used in the conversation below.



Some messages above were translated into English as below.

- Handian : Jadi nga restart wae Wkwkwkw goreng milik ieu mh (it’s always restarting by itself wkwkwkw I’m so unlucky)
- Intan : Wah?? naha bisa kitu nya?? (wah??how could that happen??) Sabar – sabar (be patient)
- Handian : enyaaaa (ok)

In the conversation above, Handian and Intan are talking about Handian’s hand phone which happened to be erroneous. The

message “jadi ngarestart wae wkwwkw goreng milik ieu mah” or “it’s always restarting by itself wkwwkw I’m so unlucky” shows that Handian’s phone was always restarting by itself and it gave Handian trouble. Intan responded his message by saying “wah naha bisa kitu nya?” or “how could that happen?” to question why that happened. To make Handian calm and show her sympathetic feelings toward what was happening,

she sent a message “sabar2” which is followed by emoticon :D and (̄;̄;̄;̄)\(̄̄̄̄).

Although Intan used two emoticons, mainly :D and (̄;̄;̄;̄)\(̄̄̄̄), the following table contains an analysis of the emoticon (̄;̄;̄;̄)\(̄̄̄̄) as the study focused on Eastern type emoticon.

Table 6 Analysis on emoticon 5

| E ₁ | C ₁ | C ₂ | C ₃ |
|------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| (̄;̄;̄;̄)\(̄̄̄̄) | Visual: A crying person who is being comforted by other | Show a feeling of empathy and pity | Stress a feeling of empathy and pity expressed by the speaker. The speaker was sorry for what happened. |

In the conversation, the E₁ explains that the emoticon portrays a person who is crying and is being comforted by another person, trying to make the crying person calm down.

When somebody puts their hands on other’s shoulder, it may mean that they are trying to make somebody relax and comfortable.

In the use of communication, as in the C₂ column explains, this emoticon is used to show a sympathy feeling or pity when the partner people are talking to is having a bad moment.

In C₃ column, the user of the emoticon or Intan emphasized that she was feeling sorry for what had happened. Knowing that her friend was having a bad moment, she expressed her feeling of empathy through the emoticon. The emoticon (̄;̄̄̄̄;̄)\(̄~̄)) was used by Intan after “sabar2” to emphasize that she was feeling empathy with what was happening to her friend and hoped that her friend would be calm.

Rojas, Kirschenmann, and Wolpers (2012) discover that emoticons help the users to show their feeling while having conversation in online media. Moreover, they also discover that emoticons can be a good indicator for perceived quality of the chat relationship. In this case, from all of the conversation, the relationship of all speakers’ can be indicated by emoticons. It can be seen by knowing

that many of them are friends, even close-friends or relative.

Relation between Gender and the use of emoticons

In this study, 15 full conversations with maximum 20 dialogues were collected; there are 5 conversations between male and male, 5 conversations between female and female, and 5 conversation between female and male. From the collections, the number of emoticons (Eastern and Western type) used by them in the conversation was counted.

Table 7: Percentages table of the emoticons used

| Conversation | Female | Male | P |
|-------------------|--------|------|-----|
| Female and Female | 29 | - | 47% |
| Male and Male | - | 6 | 9% |
| Female and Male | 17 | 15 | 44% |

According to Kuebli, Butler and Fivush (1995), mothers believe that females are more expressive than males and talk more about emotions and show more varied facial expressions. In the conversation between female to female, it appears that women are more expressive in their conversations. In the conversation between female and female, from the percentages of 100%, they used emoticons for about 47%. Many of them use emoticons to express their feelings; such as the emoticon (o. ~)з ƒ°°°♥ , (~▼~)-c<~_~) and also the western type emoticons such as ☺ or ☹ .

Wolf (2000) also says that women are more expressive when they talk each other. It happens in online communication, in Blackberry messenger, when they can use emoticons which are visually interesting; they use them often to convey what they want to say.

In the conversation between male to male, the emoticon which appears in the conversation is about 9%. Wolf (2000), in her study,

confirms that women came more emotional when they talk to same gender, but it is not the same for men. Instead of using Eastern emoticons which are visually more attractive, they prefer to use Western emoticons such as ☺ or ☹ as the emoticons are simpler than the eastern ones.

Wolf's (2000) claim concerning men who rarely use emoticons supports my finding that when men talk to men in online media or communication, such as Blackberry Messenger, it appears that they are not too expressive as women in using emoticons. Only 9% out of 100% of the emoticon was used by men.

However, in the conversation between female and male, there is no difference in using emoticons. In the conversation between female to male, the frequency of using the emoticons is 44%. The use of emoticons between them is almost equal and there is no significant difference. As Wolf (2000) also discovers in her study that instead of being silenced, males follow the females' standard of expressing emotion when they talk to females in

the newsgroup. It also occurred in the conversation, when males talk to females, males follow females standard in expressing feeling in order to not to make the conversation not interesting.

CONCLUSION

The research aims to investigate the meaning and the functions of autotext emoticons or eastern type emoticons which are used in Blackberry Messenger. The theory proposed by Eco (1994) was used to answer the questions. In addition, the relation of gender in using emoticons was also investigated to discover if there is any difference between male and female in using emoticons. The emoticons analysis shows that the meaning of the emoticons is not always the same as what emoticons portray. For example, the emoticon 🕺 🕺 🕺 may portrays a dancing person, yet it does not mean that when someone is using the emoticon, the user is dancing while texting. From the result, the

emoticon means that the user is feeling happy.

In the end, the emoticons are not necessarily used to represent the users' feelings, they are also used to strengthen messages, and to joke around with partners. The emoticons were analyzed by Eco's (1994) hermetic drift which involve the context of the conversation to investigate the emoticons. The topics of the emoticon come into the main factors in how emoticons are used by the users. The users of the emoticons often consider the topic they have to determine what emoticons they are going to use.

Gender plays a role in using emoticons. The results show that females become more expressive than males in using emoticons in a conversation between females and females. While males are the opposite; male becomes less expressive in using emoticons in a conversation between males and males. However, when males talk to females in one conversation, males adopt females' standard in expressing feelings so that

they appears to be as expressive as females in the conversation between females and males.

Future research can focus on other types of emoticons. The emoticons of Line Messenger or Kakao which appear in stickers can also be analyzed using a semiotic study.

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