

**THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE EMOTICONS USED BY
INDONESIAN MALE AND FEMALE ADOLESCENTS
IN THEIR BLOGS IN www.blogspot.com**

RISKA MERSANDY

mersandy1989@gmail.com

**PROGRAM STUDI SAstra INGGRIS
UNIVERSITAS AIRLANGGA SURABAYA**

ANNA DEWANTI

annadewanti9@gmail.com

**DOSEN DEPARTEMEN SAstra INGGRIS
UNIVERSITAS AIRLANGGA SURABAYA**

ABSTRACT

The development of Internet language leads to the introduction of emoticons to cope with the lack of visual contacts or facial expression. Consequently, emoticons play a crucial role in Internet communication because they create more expressive messages and can be used as a means of visual communication among the users. This paper tries to identify and explain the use of emoticons by males and females. The writers conduct a study on 30 Indonesian adolescents' blogs. The number of postings analyzed consists of 15 postings of male blogs and 15 postings of female blogs, and each posting consists of 300 until 500 words. The total number of words in the corpus is 12,539 word tokens. This study confirms that both male and female adolescents combine the use of the Western emoticons and Eastern emoticons. The data shows female adolescents use 182 emoticons, while male adolescents only use 57 emoticons in their blogs. The 182 emoticons used by the females can be categorized into five groups, they are happy, sad, angry, tired, and love. Whereas, the 57 emoticons used by the males can be classified into three groups, they are happy, angry and tired emoticons. This means that females do not only use more emoticons, but also more various emoticons than males do. Since emoticons have been interpreted as an indicator of expressiveness in the absence of paralanguage or extralinguistic cues, we can also say that female adolescents tend to be more expressive than male adolescents in online settings, particularly in their blogs.

Keywords: adolescents; blog; Eastern emoticons; emoticons; Western emoticons.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet now is one of the media for people from all ages to communicate with other people throughout the world and find the latest information. Markplus Insight Survey which conducted the study about online behavior Internet users in Southeast Asia stated that the Internet users in Indonesia in 2011 reached 55 million people from August until September 2011 in 11 cities such as Jakarta and its neighboring cities, Surabaya, Bandung, Semarang, Medan,

Makassar, Denpasar, Pekanbaru, Palembang and Banjarmasin (The Jakarta Post, 28 October 2011). As a result “if the Internet is a revolution, therefore it is likely to be a linguistic revolution” (Crystal, 2006: x). It means that the phenomenon of Internet gives impact on language. The writers notice that nowadays Internet language plays a crucial role in linguistics.

Among adolescents, a blog is one of the popular Internet communication forums besides Facebook or Twitter. A blog provides evidence of a new genre of diary writing and often as a personal journal or ongoing commentary about one self (Herring et al., 2004 in Huffaker & Calvert, 2005). This study focuses on the language use especially in personal blogs in www.blogspot.com because the notion of a personal blog actually covers many types of linguistic activity (Crystal, 2006: 242). In a personal blog, it appears that there are a lot of unique features of writing such as emoticons. In this study, the writers focus on the use of emoticons by Indonesian male and female adolescents in their blogs in www.blogspot.com because emoticons is a kind of unique feature, innovative style of writing, and digital phenomenon in Internet communication. The writers choose blogs which maintained by Indonesian adolescents because nowadays they tend to spend much time in online settings. The statistic shows that 53% users of the Internet in Indonesia are dominated by adolescents in the age of 15 until 19 years old (Edukasi kompas, 20 March 2009).

Emoticon is “a combination of keyboard characters designed to show an emotional facial expression; they are typed in sequence on a single line, and placed after the final punctuation mark of a sentence” (Crystal, 2006: 39). “Emoticon has been interpreted as an indicator of emotional expressiveness and a means of conveying nonverbal communication in the absence of paralinguistic or extralinguistic cues” (Danet & Herring 2007: 121). By doing this research, the writers investigate the use of emoticons in male and female adolescents’ blogs and observe who is more expressive between Indonesian male and female adolescents in using emoticons in their blogs.

There are three articles that are closely related to this study. The first article examines the use of emoticons in *Kaskus—the largest Indonesian Community and in Instant Messaging*. Sukyadi, Setyarini and Junida (2011) conduct the study entitled *A semiotic analysis of cyber emoticons (A case study of Kaskus Emoticons in the Longue Forum at Kaskus—the largest Indonesian Community*. In their article, they examine the significance of Kaskus emoticons in the Longue forum at Kaskus, the Largest Indonesian Community. They find that Kaskus emoticons in the Longue forum serve as a means of (visual) communication and shows mood of the users.

The second article by Ip (2002) focuses on the impact of emoticons on the interpretation in Instant Messaging. She conducts an experiment on how emoticons influence receivers’ interpretation of the affect intensity of instant messages. She find that a [:)] smiling emoticons increase the positivity more than [:(] frowning emoticons increase the negativity of a negative Instant Messaging message. The third article is *Gender, identity and language use in teenage blogs* by Huffaker & Calvert (2005). They examine the adolescent bloggers’ identity in terms of names and other personal information. In their article they also discuss

about emotive features used in teenage blogs. The three articles mentioned above focus on the emoticons in Instant Messaging, forum community and blogging sites. The first article is investigated by using semiotic analysis, the second article focuses on the impact of emoticons in interpreting the message, and the last article discusses gender identity and emoticons in teenage blogs. However, Huffaker & Calvert (2005) use the blogs that written by Western teenagers. In this study, the writers focus on the use of emoticons among particular groups especially found in Indonesian male and female adolescent's blogs. The writers examine the frequency of emoticons used by Indonesian male and female adolescents' blogs then compare the frequency of emoticons in Indonesian male and female adolescents' blogs in order to determine who is more expressive in online settings.

By doing this research the writers hope that it has the contribution to the area of Internet linguistics especially about emoticons. The writers also hope that the findings can be used to enrich our knowledge in understanding the difference of Internet language between male and female in order to avoid misunderstanding especially in online settings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted by classifying the emoticons used in Indonesian male and female adolescents' blogs. Through this research the writers described the use of emoticons and counted the total number of emoticons used by Indonesian male and female adolescents in their blogs, so in this article, the writers used qualitative approach. Through this approach, a researcher quantified the qualitative data. This involves creating codes and themes qualitatively, then counting the number of times they occur in the text data (Creswell, 2003: 220-221).

In collecting the corpus for this study, the writers first selected the source of data which were taken from 15 Indonesian male and 15 Indonesian female adolescents' blogs. Adolescents in this source of data are young person who is developing from a child into an adult; between the ages of 13 and 18 (Oxford, 2010: 19). Therefore, the writers used the adolescents' blogs that written by junior high school and senior high school students in Sidoarjo. The writers also chose the postings that have the same topics, and then the writers determined to use the topic that relates to school because all of the blogs written by students. The corpus of this research was in the form of posting in Indonesian male and female adolescents' blogs. The amount of postings that the writers used was 15 postings of male blogs and 15 postings of female blogs and each posting consists of 300 until 500 words. Thus, total of the number of words were 12,539 word tokens. Based on the explanation above, in this research, the writers controlled some variables such as the number of blogs, the number of words, age, education, and the topic of the postings.

The writers started to collect the data by doing several steps. First, the writers copied and pasted the postings from Indonesian male and female adolescents' blogs into Microsoft Word. Second, the writers chose the postings by male and female adolescents' blogs with the same topic in order to obtain the similar data. The postings chosen are those related to the topic about school. This

is also the most popular topic written by the male and female adolescents because they are still at school. Third, the writers only chose the postings which contain a good number of words. In this case, a posting is included in the data if it contains between 300 and 500 words. Fourth, the writers limit the number of postings finally selected into 15 postings by males and 15 postings by females.

After collecting the data, the writers classified and counted the frequency of emoticons in male and female adolescents' blogs by using *AntConc* software. *AntConc* is a freeware, multiplatform tool for carrying out corpus linguistics research and data-driven learning (Anthony, 2011). It is useful text analysis tool because it contains some categories to be analyzed for examples concordance, concordance plot, collocates and wordlist and so on. In this research the writers used wordlist category because it contains the frequency and rank of each word. In applying this software, the format of file must be in txt. After obtaining the list, the writers classify the emoticons into several categories in order to see who uses more various emoticons.

1. Male emoticons versus female emoticons

As shown in the Table 1, the writers discover that 182 emoticons are used dominantly by female adolescents while only 57 emoticons are used by male adolescents. The use of emoticons by adolescents is varied especially in female adolescents' blogs.

Table 1
Emoticons used in Indonesian male and female adolescents' blogs

Emoticons	Some Examples	Total
Male	:D, -___-, :), :o, =D, (-_-), -_-“, :p, =))))), ^__^, O:), -,“	57
Female	:D, -___-, :* , :3, =)), :p, : (, :o, T_T, ._. , ㄟ_ㄟ, (`▽´)-σ	182

In Internet communication, the use of emoticons is necessary to be added on the message in order to convey facial expression and indicate the state of mind of the person who communicates in the internet. Some types of emoticons illustrate the feelings of the users, for instance emoticons that demonstrate happiness, sadness, joke, sympathy, good mood, delight, amusement, horror, shock, and other feelings. Therefore by using emoticons, the readers can interpret the facial expression of the users. In this research the writers divide emoticons into five categories, they are happy, sad, angry, tired, and love emoticons. The writers found the frequency of emoticons in male blogs is 57 which represent 0.97% of the number of male word tokens. Some examples are discussed in the Table 2.

Table 2
An illustration of some varieties of male emoticons

Happy emoticons	makasih faaat. . :D
Angry emoticons	Yang paling takutin yaitu ujian praktek IPA :o byangin cobak, materinya banyak banget terus nanti kita diundi dapat bagian apa :o OH MY GOD ! Bayangin cobak kalau gua disuruh nembang :o pasti Sidoarjo bergetar
Tired emoticons	gue shock banget ketika tau jadwal kegiatan gue yang dipenuhi dengan tryout tryout dan tryout -_-

As shown in Table 2, in male adolescents' blogs, the writers found that male adolescents only express happy, angry and tired emoticons. The first example represents happy emoticons which signed by grin emoticons [:D]. The colon punctuation mark (:) imitates the eyes, while the uppercase alphabet D replicates the mouth open widely. Thus when the user put this grin emoticon in the blogs, it is like the user expresses his amusement for example *makasih faaat. . :D*. This can denote that the user express his thankful to his friend with the happy face. In the second example, the user use angry emoticons which consist of the colon punctuation mark (:) and the lower case alphabet O. The colon symbols used to represent eyes and the alphabet O signify the round mouth. This kind of emoticon modified to indicate shock expression or angry face. The male user uses this emoticon to convey that he is getting shock of his science examination. The last example is tired emoticon. It represented by using dash or hyphens and underscores signs. The dash symbols (-) signify the squint eyes while the underscore symbols (_) imitate the mouth. The user uses this emoticon to express flat face or to show his dislike of try out schedule. The writers found that male adolescents employ English CMC and Japanese (*kaomoji*) emoticons (Nishimura, 2003 in Danet & Herring, 2007: 172). English CMC emoticons which are usually called Western emoticons style are mostly read sideways. It has the eyes on the left then followed by the nose and mouth, for instance [:D], [:-)], and [:o], while Japanese (*kaomoji*) emoticons or Eastern style emoticons are read upright for instance [-__-] and [^_^]. Thus, the first and the second example are categorized as Western emoticons and the last example belongs to Eastern emoticons.

The Western emoticons [:D] or grin emoticon is the highest frequency in male adolescents blogs. It appears 19 times and shows a happy facial expression. The second popular emoticons among male adolescents are the Eastern emoticons such as [-__-]. This feature occurs 14 times in male blogs. In Facebook this kind of emoticons usually called as squint emoticons which represent a tired face. Even though emoticons are very popular, male adolescents do not always include them in their postings.

In female adolescents' blogs, emoticons appear 182 times, which represent 2.72% of the total number of word tokens they use in their blogs. The writers found a various types of emoticons used in female blogs. These emoticons can be

categorized into emoticons that express happiness, sadness, anger, tiredness and love. Some examples are shown in the Table 3.

Table 3
An illustration of some varieties of female emoticons

Happy emoticons	BANGGA BANGGA BANGGA ლ(◃◃) (ლ◃◃)ლ
Sad emoticons	Masa cuma gara-gara aku kandidat 3 ga jadi kampanye T_T
Angry emoticons	aku dapet tugas dari sekolah yang gilak banyak banget. anjir sumpah III(°D°III)
Tired emoticons	ORnya jalan-jalan. Jauh juga ternyata --"
Love emoticons	CINTA KEBERSAMAAN KALIAN REK:*

The first emoticons ლ(◃◃) (ლ◃◃)ლ is categorized as happy emoticons. The use of triangle symbol (◃) used to mark the open mouth, this symbol (ლ) signifies the hand movement, and (◃) the eyes symbols are high-up. Thus, this female user is in a good mood and expresses her pride as a leader of her class by using this emoticons ლ(◃◃) (ლ◃◃)ლ to express a happy face and seems like the user is dancing for example *BANGGA BANGGA BANGGA ლ(◃◃) (ლ◃◃)ლ*. The female user in the second example type the uppercase alphabet T and underscore symbols (_) to show crying face. The two letters T used to indicate tears and the underscore symbols used to indicate the mouth. Therefore, this emoticon [T_T] categorized as sad emoticons.

This emoticons III(°D°III) represent the mouth wide open and the degree symbols (°) to indicate eyes. This symbol (III) is employed to show hand movement, it seems like that symbols show raised arms. Thus the idea of angry can be virtually adapted by the users by using that emoticon. In this third example, the female user put angry emoticons to show that a lot of school assignments annoyed her. The fourth emoticon is categorized as tired emoticons because it shows the sweat drop [--"]. The two hyphen (-) symbols are employed to show the closed eyes and the quotation mark used to indicate the sweat drop. Emoticons such as [:*] represent love emoticons. That is considered as kiss emoticon (:-*) or (:*) which is composed of a colon (:) and asterisks (*). It is an adaptation of an image of kissing.

According to the data from the Indonesian female adolescents' blogs, the emoticon of [-_-] or a squint emoticon is the common use of the emoticons. It appears 29 times in female blogs. The second highest number of emoticons in the female blogs is [:D] or a grin emoticon that appears 28 times. The writers also discovered that both Western and Eastern emoticons are used in the blogs. The examples in the first until the fourth lines in Table 3 are the examples of Eastern emoticons, while the one in the last line is categorized as a Western emoticon.

2. Using emoticons and being expressive

According to the data, female adolescents are more expressive than male, as many as 182 emoticons or 2.72% of female word tokens were found in female adolescents' blogs and 57 emoticons or 0.97% of male word tokens were found in

and female adolescents combine the use of the Western emoticons and Eastern emoticons in their blogs. However, there are differences in the number of emoticons and types of emoticons used. The data shows that female adolescents use 182 emoticons, while male adolescents only use 57 emoticons in their blogs. This shows that females use more emoticons than males. In addition, females also use more various emoticons than male. The 182 emoticons used by the females can be categorized into five groups, they are happy, sad, angry, tired, and love. Whereas, the 57 emoticons used by the males can be classified into three groups, they are happy, angry and tired emoticons. Consequently, we can say that females are more expressive than males in the online setting, particularly in writing in their blogs.

REFERENCES

- Anthony, L. (2011, November 10). *AntConc* (Windows, Macintosh OS X , and Linux). Retrieved July 22, 2012, from Laurence Anthony's Web site. <http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html>
- Cresswell, J.W. (2003). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative , and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Vol. Second edition). London: Sage Publications.
- Crystal, D. (2004). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. (2006). *Language and the Internet : 'Engaging & provocative' Nature* (2nd edition ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. (2011). *Internet Linguistics : A student guide*. New York: Routledge.
- Danet, B., & Herring, S. C. (2007). *The Multilingual Internet*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Edukasi kompas. (2009, March 20). *Pengguna Internet Indonesia Didominasi Remaja*. Retrieved May 31, 2012, from Kompas.com: <http://edukasi.kompas.com/read/2009/03/20/2028042/Pengguna.Internet.In.donesia.Didominasi.Remaja>.
- Huffaker, D.A., and Calvert, S.L. (2005). Gender, identity, and language used in teenage blogs. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 10(2), article 1. Retrieved on November 1st, 2011 from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue2/huffaker.html>
- Ip, A. (2002). *The Impact of Emoticons on Affect Interpretation in Instant Messaging*. Retrieved April 26, 2012, from Amysmile Web site: <http://amysmile.com>. (2002, December 1)
- Nishimura, Y. (2003). Linguistic Innovations and Interactional Features in Japanese BBS Communication. In B. Danet, & S. C. Herring, *The Multilingual Internet*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Oxford. (2010). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, New Edition*. Oxford : University Press.
- Roman, C. (1994). *The Women and Language Debate : A Sourcebook*. Piscataway: Rutgers University Press.
- Sukyadi, D., Setyarini, S., & Junida, A. I. (2011). A Semiotic Analysis of Cyber Emoticons (A case Study of Kaskus Emoticons in the Longue Forum at Kaskus-the Largest Indonesian Community). *k@t@*, 37.

The Jakarta Post. (2011, October 28). *Internet users in Indonesia reaches 55 million people*. Retrieved June 22, 2012, from The Jakarta Post Web site: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/10/28/internet-users-indonesia-reaches-55-million-people.html>

Tseliga, T. (2007). "It's All Greeklish to Me !". In B. Danet, & S. C. Herring, *The Multilingual Internet* (p. 121). New York: Oxford University Press.

Varnhagen, et al. (2009). lol : new language and spelling in instant messaging. *Springer Science+Business Media* , 123.

Appendix

Emoticons found in male adolescents' blogs

Emoticons	Total number found	Meaning	Type
:D	19	Big smile	Happy
-__-	14	Not in a mood, tired, boring	Tired
=D	6	Big smile	Happy
:)	5	Smiling	Happy
:o	3	Surprise, shock	Angry
(^^D)	1	Happy face	Happy
-,“	1	Not in a mood	Tired
-__-“	1	Not in a mood	Tired
(“)^.^(“)	1	Happy face	Happy
=	1	Not in a mood	Tired
O:)	1	Angel	Happy
=))))))	1	Very happy	Happy
:p	1	Joking, tongue out	Happy
(-_-)	1	Not in a mood	Tired
^_^	1	Smiling, happy	Happy
Total	57		

Emoticons found in female adolescents' blogs

Emoticons	Total number found	Meaning	Type
-__-	29	Not in a mood, tired, boring	Tired
:D	28	Big smile	Happy
:*	12	Kissing, love, affection	Love
:p	12	Joking, tongue out	Happy
=))	10	Smiling	Happy
:3	9	Happy face	Happy
:)	8	Smiling	Happy
-o-	8	Surprise, shock	Angry
--“	5	Not in a mood	Tired
Щ(°Д°)Щ	4	Angry , shock	Angry

:(3	Unhappy	Sad
:o	3	Surprise, shock	Angry
u,u	3	Not in a mood	Tired
<3	3	Love, heart	Love
{}	3	Hug	Love
T_T	3	Crying	Sad
:33333	2	Very happy face	Happy
-oo-	2	Surprise, shock	Angry
=))))))	2	Smiling	Happy
>w<	2	Annoyed	Angry
DX	2	Unhappy	Sad
(y)	2	Thumb, yes	Happy
--a	1	Not in a mood	Tired
l(♥~♥)f	1	In love	Love
:O	1	Surprise, shock	Angry
._.	1	Not in a mood	Tired
(f~)	1	Praying	Happy
>.<	1	Annoyed	Angry
:”	1	Unhappy	Sad
l(˘▽˘) (f˘▽˘)f	1	Dancing	Happy
(π_π)	1	Crying	Sad
;]	1	Wink	Happy
:333333	1	Very happy face	Happy
:3333333	1	Very happy face	Happy
:3333	1	Very happy face	Happy
Γ(o)Γ	1	Dancing	Happy
¬_¬	1	Mad	Angry
t(-_t)	1	Not in a mood	Tired
(˘▽˘)-σ	1	Happy face	Happy
(♥ε♥)l	1	Kissing, love, affection	Love
;)	1	Wink	Happy
XD	1	Big smile	Happy
^^	1	Smiling	Happy
:”D	1	Big smile	Happy
=/	1	Not in a mood	Tired
>^<	1	Annoyed	Angry
Total	182		