

The Role of Visual Modes in Social Media Communication



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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

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Dedication

My MA dissertation is dedicated to my parents who have been always by my side, to my husband who has inspired me and to my baby with whom I have been struggling with.

Acknowledgements

This journey is one of the toughest one for me as I was not physically as well as mentally well from the very beginning of it. At first I decided to drop off then again prepared my mind to go for it. Then again I lost hopes and then some people who have great importance in my life gave me support to do it. My husband is one of them who encouraged me to go to the end whatsoever happens. Then my supervisor Nazah Farhat ma'am encouraged me a lot and said 'yes you can do it' and her words have always made me desperate to complete my task. Without her support it wouldn't have been possible to finish this research. She has guided me so well that I sometimes felt that if she didn't agree to supervise me then I don't know what could have happened. Words will be inadequate for her the way she supported me not only in this research but also my mental condition during this period.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In this paper a very interesting topic has been talked-about. Though this topic is drawing the attention of so many researchers nowadays but in Bangladesh less importance has been given to this type of research. People are getting interested in using different kinds of modes as they find it easy to use as these are found easy to communicate with others via social media. In most of the research, researchers have found positive impact of these modes among people and very less have been reported that they sometimes find it annoying when these create misunderstanding. But in this paper the influence of these modes has been focused on day to day communication via Facebook of Bangladeshi people. Even this paper has found positive results and views from the participants. Through a qualitative research method, an effective result has been established here and data has been collected by observing and via screenshots of posts, status, comments, replies of comments and through interviews where interviewees have participated through Facebook Messenger where questions have been asked and answered through chatting. Only five participants have been selected for better understanding. As the focus is how they communicate with each other through social media where the particular platform Facebook has been selected based on its popularity it has been found by the research that people are interested to use and feel positivity towards the usage of these modes and prefer to use it in daily purposes.

Communication to convey what matters to people has not been only the matter of face to face interaction with the known people, rather it has been now seen that this has got a new face by using verbal and non-verbal modes of communication in social media. Social media is a platform where people can show their love, respect, humanity, unity for each other and can communicate with the world including to its loved one. The recent incident can be taken as an example for this. And this recent incident has got a wide range of vibe to save the Muslim people from the unjustified attacks of Israel military forces. People from all over the world are showing their humanity for this war of Israel military force with the people of Palestine through hashtags. This example has been taken here just to show how people these days are using social media for their way of communication in this world of complexity. In this paper the target is to reach people with a note that how people use Facebook to communicate in their daily lives and their

communication through emoji, stickers, GIFs and images and role of these visual modes. Emoji are digital pictograms or pictorial icons that are popular not only on online networking but also in offline text messages too. Emoji are compared as ‘ubiquitous language’ because they can span different languages because of their pictorial quality (Kimura-Thollander & Kumar, 2019). Facebook stickers are images that are used for expressing oneself and are used for fun, these are just like emoji these help to express feelings and sometimes in stickers objects and scenes are depicted from TV series, popular cartoon characters or animated movie characters, some stickers are found moving or like dancing. In Facebook Messenger, e-stickers can be downloaded for free by the users and from those downloading these can be used in chat box (Konrad et al., 2020). In comment threads of Facebook it is found that stickers need not to be downloaded. GIFs are images but these are moving images (Facebook & Twitter, n.d.) which are captured from a popular scene of a movie and there is no sound as there are only facial expressions and some verbal texts are written for better understanding and these are repeated for a while. Images are captured moments or scenes and these are sometimes projected as memes which are used for most of the time as fun posts; there are some images that are used in Facebook which are real pictures of celebrities, except these there are various types of images found in Facebook which are not only used for fun posts but are used for sometimes as for serious tone or warning or for lamenting one. The use of emoji, stickers, GIFs and images have been seen to get a wide range of popularity for the facial expression they carry; among emoji especially smileys got more popularity than others. The reason behind this popularity can be justified in this way that emoji carry facial expressions and these are colorful forms of emoticons (emoticons were used in text messages to make indication of facial expressions with the help of punctuations). Even people are seen to use emoticons these days too but they prefer to use emoji instead of emoticons. People are found to use emoji as sometimes they can react through these expressions without even saying or writing a single word. It has got its first popularity in office works and talks and after that people start using this in their daily conversation. And now it’s got popularity due to its demandable usage. Another reason for its popularity is its colorfulness. Emoji are seen in different colours according to the demand and this demand is for the different cultural backgrounds; because it is not only one country who works for the invention of emoji rather well known countries have and are working for it and the users are from different cultural backgrounds so there are varieties of collection and colour and theme. Use of emoji spread in

1999 when first launched by a Japanese telephone company but at that time it was not available on other operators so other companies tried to invent other sets and make possible usage by their users. And finally in 2009, it was recognized internationally so that other operators can access it. For this reason people all over the world can communicate through emoji without even knowing each other personally and the facial expression helps them to understand the mood of their friends who are far away from them or who are not in face to face interaction. GIFs, images and stickers are found popular after emoji. Along with verbal text emoji, stickers, images and GIFs are used to communicate. And as sometimes people prefer not saying a word except using different modes it is because these carry facial expressions by which one can understand one's mood whether it is sad, happy, crying, evil, funny, laughing, loved etc. 🤔😂😞 these are some examples of emoji which can easily help one to express the feelings showing facial expression. Influence of these various modes are found implementing in almost all of the posts and status people do share on Facebook. Again via other research it's been found that sometimes people demand to express themselves with different types of modes which are not available on a keyboard.

Technology is great support for using these various kinds of modes because without its help it wouldn't be possible to get use of these. Even updated versions are found because of technology. Well it may be a matter of concern why Facebook has been selected where there are so many other platforms then the answer is- Facebook is easy to reach and is used by all types of people from rich to poor, from young generation to old one as it is easy to use and easy to convey thoughts and feelings. Facebook is seen as a part and parcel of everyday life where people use to give about their updated information as like where they are going, what they are eating, their location, their feelings, emotions and so on to share with their family and friends and sometimes to some unknown receivers (if the post is shared with public figure). Therefore Facebook is very popular among other social platforms. And Messenger is a messaging app that is worldwide popular via which people do have some chats, can have video and audio calls with their family and friends and where the same set of various modes are found as found in Facebook while posting or sharing something. Flynn (2014) has mentioned that emoji have been found available in Facebook from 2010 since incorporation with mobile phone apps whereas stickers have been available on Messenger since 2013 (Konrad et al., 2020).

Chapter 2

Literature review

Language is a communicative way to convey feelings, emotions, thoughts, and opinions so it has many functions to perform. One sentence of a language can deal with so many meanings depending on its usage. Because the same sentence may have many meanings according to the context or condition it is being used. ‘Semantics’ and ‘Pragmatics’ are two functions that are played by a language. The former one is the structural meaning of a sentence that is conveyed by a language where later one deals with contextual meaning of a sentence. Pragmatics has a broader sense as it depends on the situation. In the book of *A Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics* by Alan Cruse, the production of a language has been divided into three parts- Locutionary speech act, Illocutionary speech act and Perlocutionary speech act. Locutionary speech act is the production of utterance. Illocutionary speech act is performance of utterance and perlocutionary speech act is the production that is depended on a specific event. Therefore the meaning making of a sentence is varied from context to context.

It is not mandatory that language must be verbal as it is discussed above that performed language has many meanings. There are non-verbal languages which help to communicate and these are sign languages. Different kinds of signs carry out different kinds of meanings. The field that studies sign languages is called ‘Semiotics’. (Cruse, 2006)

There is a term named ‘Paralinguistic signs’. It deals with gestures, facial expressions, modulation of voice and it is to be mentioned that speech can or cannot be accompanied with these. For example- smile doesn’t need speech to be accompanied. (Cruse, 2006)

All developers and recipients of learning materials are considered as “meaning maker” or “sign maker” in the context of social semiotic explanation of language and its relevance. The method of producing signs is often dependent on the supply of semiotic tools as well as their appropriateness. Only concentrating on designers avoiding the users of signs can’t enable the analysis of the expressions. Mode is responsible for shaping the process of meaning making with the socio cultural influence. Diverse usages of modes produce meaning of particular expressions in which multiple modes employ various tools or methods to generate meanings in diverse ways.

Sometimes, sign makers incorporate multiple modes to generate intricate sense, sometimes antithetical sense because of their own desire and the desired subject matters are to use for communication conveying the preferences of the community. In social semiology, what is to be regarded as mode is regarded by the community and their “representational requirements as a matter of choice”. On the other hand, the medium is the matter through or by which the meaning is understood. In digital platforms, a sequence of meaning making process operating various tools take place (Bezemer & Kress, 2008).

In human society a variety of modes are used to represent society where each mode has specific social context and there are different potentials of meaning-making (Kress & Leeuwen, 2008).

In social media, for both cases of verbal and non-verbal modes of communication emoji, stickers, images and GIFs are seen in their best usage and it has become possible because of technology. It is technology through which texting messages was invented in 1990 and it was not so flexible because of its coasting. And this thing led to a new system of writing text which is making messages in short form of spelling which is txtspk (Seargeant, 2019). Emoticons were popular at the time only on computer use but later on made their place on offline messages through mobile phones using punctuations. And this very thing led to the invention of emoji because if anyone wants to express his/her feelings then it would not be possible to make it understood without using facial expression or voice tone. This is how people through facial expressions like with the help of emoticons started their journey of conveying thoughts in social media and then this use of emoticons became more specific with the help of emoji and this set of emoji contains different types of facial expressions. The use of emoji began to spread in 2011 as a form of global communication though in 1999 the Japanese telephone company Docomo launched the first set of emoji and was imitated by others. As this set of emoji was restricted to other applications or other mobile phone companies so in 2009 emoji were standardized internationally by the Unicode consortium and were able to be accessed by other operators (Sampietro, 2019). And therefore Pavalanathan & Eisenstein (2016) have addressed that the popularity of emoticons has been affected by the rise of emoji. Because of its popularity, Oxford Dictionaries chose ‘tear of joy’ emoji as ‘word of the year’ in 2015 (Konrad et al., 2020; Seargeant, 2019). As Japanese do not differentiate between single and plural so to them ‘emoji’

convey both singular and plural but in English extra ‘-s’ is added to make the differentiation (Sergeant, 2019).

Emoji are the set of picture characters which people use for online communication. Densei (2017) has said that emoji as it was first launched by a Japanese company so this is a term in Japanese which means picture and letter (Arafah & Muhammad, 2020; Wang, 2019). Emoji have been defined by many authors in different ways where the perspective is the same because emoji are used to express someone’s feelings, emotions. Ruedenberg-Wright & Rosenbaum-Tamari (1997) have coined emoji as an iconic form that are used to express emotions (Danet et al., 2006). Rezabek & Cochenour (1998) have defined emoji as visual cues that are formed from typographic symbols to represent feelings and emotions (Arafah & Muhammad, 2020). Emoji is more complex and more expressive than emoticons and visually richer in text based conversation (Konrad et al., 2020). Emoji represents emotions and feelings so a set of emoji represents facial expressions like smiles, laughs, winks, kissing etc. Dresner & Harring (2010) have mentioned that emoji not only express emotion but also indicate illocutionary forces (Konrad et al., 2020). Emoji also works as punctuation (Konrad et al., 2020; Markman & Oshima, 2007).

Arafah & Muhammad (2020) have cited- as emoji is considered as non-verbal language therefore like verbal language it has linguistic function too. These linguistic functions are syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. Syntactic function of emoji is as it is a part of a sentence so it sometimes holds its position at the beginning of a sentence, sometimes in the middle of a sentence and sometimes at the end of a sentence. The semantic function of emoji is as it conveys the structural meaning of a sentence and lastly the pragmatic function of emoji is the sign of emoji as interpreted by the receiver in accordance with context that is actually an interaction between a sender and receiver of a conversation. Hence like a verbal language emoji itself works for the meaning making process. While for text messages whether it is for online or offline sometimes emoji are used without a verbal word or sentence and sometimes these are placed with verbal text. In both cases (with or without verbal sentence) it can give the same meaning because of its expressive tone and pictorial quality. Though the function of emoji is a visual language, it has become part of a sentence.

Meaning making process of emoji is of great concern. Functions of emoji are growing as many researchers have been finding varieties of functions. For example some have found emoji may be used to create connected conversation, playful interaction, and uniqueness; to make the tone specify, to make recipients engaged, and to help for maintenance of relationship; and to soften or strengthen the message or to enhance its irony, fun, and positivity. In most of the cases it is seen that emoji are used for informal interaction. In the domain of discourse, it is seen that emoji are helpful to make the conversation manageable as it has been said earlier about its linguistic function. Different patterns of usage of emoji depend on different topics and exchange of emotion of conversation (Sampietro, 2019).

Language changes every year as there are many words added to make the language more specific or according to the needs of society, culture and its people. For example, Oxford Dictionary in a year upgrades four times with hundreds of new words to entry. So it can be argued that aspects of modern life are not the same as were in the previous era. Though English is a living language and has its own rules in the world, the thing is that emoji is making things more interesting as it fills the gaps of vocabularies and makes the conversation more interesting as it gives words emotions to express. From this perspective emoji are a simplified form of global connection. And it is possible because of technology as it is becoming more choreographed with everyday lives. Therefore inventing emoji can be considered as ingenuity and creativity at the heart of human interaction (Seargeant, 2019). It is completely a new system of expression in this era.

In a language new words are added. And in premises of emoji they are built to be upgraded as new emoji are added to make things easier and suitable to use. Emoji are being used in every possible way of modern society- from politics to marketing, mourning, fashion designing, architecture, art, advertising and commerce. Philip Seargeant (2019) has truly claimed that emoji are touchstones for creative expression.

Though people are still struggling to find a perfect way to communicate then from this perspective emoji plays a fundamental role. But it is to be noted that emoji is not a language because it is not a symbolic communication system. It can be proclaimed that emoji are not a simple set of pictures as from the semiotic point of view these are picture characters representing objects, actions and ideas. Therefore these are a mixture of pictograms and ideograms.

Punctuation used to be the attention of a sentence structure but now it has been replaced by emoji on social media because as the function of punctuation is to organize the writing of a sentence structure, now this organization has been done by emoji while combining with sentence structure. As in this era visual languages which help to express thoughts, feelings and emotions are dominating social media and among those visual languages emoji is the widely used one. Morris (1938), has found out that text that are used in social media among those 49% are used in emoji (Arafah & Muhammad, 2020).

There are some other functions that emoji is famous for and among those ‘sarcasm’ is one. Emoji has been recognized as a sarcastic form of communication. Even emoji are used for clarifying obscure and confusing messages and it can take a conversation to the depth (Suresh, 2018). Emoji are also used for decorating a text message.

Suresh (2018) in his research has studied that emoji for instant messaging is time saving; it helps to understand one's psychology by the interpretation of the use of it; though it was introduced for making conversation humorous but it has now great impact on people because of its use. Emoji helps to build friendly relationships while communicating via messages. Again it helps to portray emotion when people are physically absent. It also fills the purpose of professionalism. Emoji are also used for modifying text messages and can also be used for distant relationships (Konrad et al., 2020).

Stickers are larger, more elaborate than emoji, character driven representations or animations sometimes to which text is attached (Konrad et al., 2020). In Japan in the year of 2011 stickers were first introduced by Korean internet company Naver. Various ways are offered by stickers to express emotions, moods and actions. Stickers keep the users engaged in messaging in different kinds of online platforms including Facebook Messenger so it is defined as a killer feature and it serves as a social symbol (Lee et al., 2016).

Jezouit (2017) has claimed that stickers as- new emoji, big bold emojis. Where Wang (2016) has addressed stickers as- oversized cartoon and character driven emoticons. Stickers which are character driven portrays facial expression along with body language and work as demonstrator. Stickers are known as a variant of emoticons (Lee et al., 2016).

Like emoji there are various types of function found in many research by authors from different backgrounds. Functions of stickers' are- these are used to maintain social status, to express oneself as he/she wants to be perceived by others, to appear as witty or modest (Konrad et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2016). Stickers are used for greetings or closing a conversation, sometimes are used for festivals and holidays and even when they don't know what to say and are used when they are culturally relevant (Konrad et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2017).

There are some other reasons to use stickers. Stickers are more expressive than emoji, stickers are self-contained, stickers are intense and louder because of their size; stickers are able to add cuteness in text messages and are able to modify text, are used for expressing personality (Konrad et al., 2020). Sometimes stickers are used to manage self-representation while one may not want to reveal true emotion (Lee et al., 2016).

Stickers are used in close relationships. Stickers are used for communicating without the need of supporting text as it is large in size and text is found attached with it. As like emoji, stickers are pragmatically remarkable for positivity, emotional intensity and for playfulness (Konrad et al., 2020).

Graphical Interchange Formats (GIFs) represent looped animations which are derived from television, movies and from other multimedia such as YouTube (Samermitt, 2018). Contemporarily in social media alongside emoji, GIFs are replete for social communication. For meaning making or storytelling, images are collaged or edited. And this idea makes it possible in case of GIFs as in GIFs particular emotions, opinions, punch lines, and reactions are applied in new context as signifiers. Even reactions are taken from popular movies, television series as repeated action, moments or dialogues, even a blink, laugh, gasp or extravagant action can be taken. And these are used as responses to others posts or claims. Isolated emotions, humor and key moments breaking into sequences and these are offered by GIFs (Highfield & Leaver, 2016). Gordon (2015) has mentioned that meaning from culture is derived by GIFs.

Bavelas, Coates & Johnson (2000) have mentioned that GIFs are used in computer-mediated communication (CMC) which may act like verbal as well as non-verbal communication that is smiling, nodding, looking confused which normally occur in face to face interaction. Expressing non-verbal backchannels in text-based mediums is very difficult but GIFs fill this gap of

communication in CMC with the help of technology (Samermit, 2018). In social media visual content has become a critical part of online communication (Highfield & Leaver, 2016; Samermit, 2018).

Among other platforms, Facebook has been found most demandable to use GIFs. To use GIFs there are keyboards on cell phones like Tenor. There is a search bar in every GIF keyboard where the users put particular words and browse for tentative results of what one is looking for. For example one may search content for ‘pinch’, ‘kill me’, ‘OMG’ etc. and from there according to the context one may select the particular one from so many outcomes to fit the conversation. GIFs help to convey the sentiment that is fit for the conversation whether it is for personal chat or for posting something publicly.

Functions of GIFs are the same as other variants of emoticons (emoji, stickers) but one is an exception and that is it helps to depict emotion along with future action. Future action is the function of GIFs and this has not been found in emoji and stickers. Hence it acts as co-speech in text messaging. Intended meaning behind the action of GIFs may be ironic, sarcastic which actually depends on the context and the receiver how he/she receives it. GIFs are often used for hidden meanings to communicate (Miltner & Highfield, 2017). In most cases GIFs are used as memes.

Even one can make GIFs with the help of the keyboards of GIFs which is a different kind of feature that has not been found in emoji and stickers. Another thing is that GIFs is a community oriented format which indicates it has cultural relevance.

Miltner & Highfield (2017) in their research have pointed out that GIFs reflect cultural knowledge and specific dispositional and emotive conditions of a person as well as illustrate the recipient’s awareness of decoding the text or cultural discourse. The artistic unique capability, incorporating the niche keywords extracted from the cultural performance, represents the emotional state or cognitive knowledge visually using the combination of graphical and digital tools. Choosing and implementing the right GIF allows cultures and associations to create their own unique definitions and perceptions for a particular set of users who are connected with similar experiences and information. These comprise negative or positive emotions as well as

contradictory things of interpersonal likings and dislikings. GIF went through a process of development cooperation and strategic criticism from textual to emotional instruments.

Images are pictures that are taken from a moment of a movie, serial or are from scenes and are used for various purposes; most often it is seen that images are used to make fun of something that is done through memes; and through an image sometimes something that is passionate or lamenting can make sense. When anything is expressed through visual image or visual communication then the uses of different colour or different compositional structures help to make different meanings so different meanings are realized and in images ‘iconographical’ or ‘iconological’ are the elements that are significant (Kress & Leeuwen, 2008). According to the position of verbal text or pictures or colours on an image, meanings are varied from context to context.

In social media these different kinds of modes have placed themselves among the highest peak of usage just because of the meaning they carry and for the flexibility of use.

Chapter 3

Methodology

To conduct this research, the theory of multimodality has been followed here because this theoretical framework is mandatory and helpful to analyze data. This theory is well known for its descriptive style. Through this theory a new way of communication has been established.

Before starting introducing to the participants and the number of them it is important to know what and how this theory works. Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen have introduced ‘Theory of Multimodality’ where they have said that communication is a multimodal process where to make meanings with the help of different kinds of modes are found under consideration. They have introduced language as social semiotic where all signs like speech, written text, sounds, alphabets, linguistic sound, non-linguistic sound, moving images, images, GIFs, emoji, gestures, postures, eye contact, facial expression are called modes and through these modes people communicate with each other. And to communicate with each other via these modes they make different kinds of meanings. As people are shaped culturally and socially so far goes to the modes; because these modes are a set of social and cultural resources of meaning making. And sometimes these modes separately give a meaning too. It has been truly said by Halliday (1978) that in socio semiotics the fundamental assumption is that language and other semiotic systems are intrinsically social (Poulsen & Kvåle, 2018). All modes are combined together to make meaning of something to communicate. Again socio-semiotic approach to multimodality actually highlights the meaning construction and representation of all forms of cultural nature (Valero-Porras & Cassany, 2015).

Collected data for this paper is in the form of written text so the choice of words, fonts, layout, colour, emoticons all are important to make meaning together. As linguistic structure has particular interpretations, so does visual structure. There are three metafunctions which are helpful for the particular interpretations of visual structure and these metafunctions are known through ‘Theory of Metafunction’ by Michael Halliday where these three metafunctions are Ideational metafunction, Interpersonal metafunction and Textual metafunction. Ideational metafunction deals with the topic or subject matter and this subject matter or topic is actually the

representation of objects and the relationship between those objects in the world of semiotic representation; where in this world of semiotic representation, experience of humans are the aspects of topic or subject matter of that particular visual structure. The second metafunction is 'Interpersonal metafunction' which deals with the relationship between the author/producer and the audience/receiver. As there needs to be someone to make or represent a particular social relation or object so there needs to be someone to receive it. To represent a particular social relation, all modes are connected or sometimes disconnected for a supposed audience; there actually as these supposed audiences are targeted for this reason the particular author has relation with its aimed audience which is dealt with by this metafunction. In textual metafunction, all types of texts are modes and here anything that is meaningful is text; different arrangements of composition and that allow the different textual meanings; here this relationship between textual compositions and images is the resource of visual grammar. To make this metafunction understandable, three interrelated systems are in need for the analysis of how the modes are arranged in a visual design.

The three interrelated systems are- Information value, Salience and Framing. Information value helps to identify the position of the modes. Placement of elements give specific informational value; and these various zones which give specific information are- left and right, top and bottom, center and margin. For left zone- it indicates given information that is fixed or general information; right zone indicates new information; top zone indicates ideal information that is general which the author wants his/her audience to know; bottom zone indicates real information which is practical; center zone indicates crucial information that is important information; and margin zone indicates additional information (this is important too as sometimes author name is written at the margin zone or sometimes established year is written). So these are the six zones of information value. For the salience, it is another helpful system because with the help of salience, font size (whether it is big or small), foreground and background are identified. Elements in this system are placed or made to attract the viewers' attention. For example, contrast of different colours, sharpness in colour to make differences, relative size of letters or alphabets, placement of elements in the background or foreground all are under consideration of the arrangement. The last one is framing. Framing helps to identify how all modes are separated or are connected. Because by separating or connecting modes, different kinds of meaning are to be found. So this one is no less important than the other interrelated systems.

Above discussed are the issues that go for this theoretical framework for meaning making process. Now the turn is what research method has been used for this research paper. For this research paper, qualitative research methodology has been used because this research depends on how people communicate through emoji, stickers, images and GIFs through the social media Facebook has observed. So observation is a research tool here. To make this journey an easy one, only five participants have been selected for better observation and data has been collected from their way of communication and it has been done with their permission. Age range of these participants are from 27-34 years except one who is under 18. The one who is under 18 is a male participant and others are the female participants. The Occupations of these participants are- student, teacher, fashion designer (online business), business women, would be doctor (working as an intern doctor). There has been no exceptional reason for selecting them in this way as it has been done in a random way.

For data, screenshots of daily communication of them have been collected through Facebook. In the screenshots, their posts, status, comments, replies are captured and their use of emoji, stickers, GIFs and images have been recorded through those screenshots. Observation of their communicating way has given this research its achievement as it has gained its aim through this investigation. Further to make this research a strong one interview has been taken individually from the participants through Facebook Messenger chat box and screenshots have been taken as collected data. And for the interview every individual has been asked one common question and it's- 'According to you what is the function of emoji, stickers, GIFs and emoji?' And some other questions have been asked as per their response. And those questions are- Do you think the posts you share or the status you give on Facebook by using different kinds of modes can make your concept noteworthy to your friends? Do you prefer using different kinds of modes to convey your concept to your Facebook friends? Do you think the posts you share or the status you give on Facebook by using different kinds of modes can make your concept noteworthy to your friends? Do you agree that using these modes can make your interaction better with your 'not face to face' communication? So you enjoy and prefer using various kinds of modes? Why do you use various types of modes to interact with people or share your thoughts on Facebook? Have you ever thought that there needs to be more emoji to express your feelings? So these questions were asked based on their answers. The common one question was asked among these

at the beginning of the interview. All participated willingly in this interview as they found it interesting.

Collected data from the participant's posts and shared status, their use of different kinds of modes and the interview all helped this research to go for its purpose. And yes before data collection, permission was taken from them.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Data

#Data 1



In this data the participant has shared a meme. By analyzing this meme some information can be found and this analysis is being done here with the help of the theory of multimodality. The first point that is to be mentioned is the ideational metafunction through which it can be understood that what it is actually talking about; the subject matter of this meme is related to ‘acceptance of nose’.

The second point that needs to be described is the relationship between the author and audience which is described under the topic ‘Interpersonal metafunction’. As this meme has been developed by a facebook page so the author is that very page which is named as- Sarcasm. Audience here are those people who find difficulties accepting the way their nose is. And this meme is made for those who can read English as it is written in English language.

The third point is very important as it gives detailed information about the meme and it is textual metafunction. The textual metafunction is the content in which lots of things are interrelated and these are information value, salience and framing. In the information value it is discussed what is the position of modes whether it is situated in top or bottom, left or right, center or margin. If the meme is seen at a glance then a nose can be seen at the top which is a little bit big in size. As the position of this mode is at the top so it is actually giving ideal information that it is a nose. For ‘salience’ (where font size, foreground, background, colour, sharpness are discussed) as the image of the nose is in foreground, the background of it is white in colour, the nose is in skin

colour which is very sharp and clear to be seen. Next to the image there is the presence of text which can be seen at the bottom; as it is in the bottom so it is actually giving the real information. This text is written in red and black colour and both these colours are very sharp and eye-catching as the background is white. The red text here indicates something dangerous which is acceptance of the nose. Size of this text is medium. As there are only two modes- one is image and another is written text and this has only one background so the whole thing is under one frame to make a meaning.

As the image and the written text are connected, the whole thing is giving a meaning that- by accepting the noise the way it is, is the first step of self-love.

Now, as the participant has shared this post and has written- 'I need time....' and has used hand shaking emoji therefore he has used both verbal language and a visual mode. What the author has meant in the meme has been understood by this participant. By using the hand shaking emoji he has perhaps meant he and time needs cooperation or this shaking hands of emoji can mean that he agrees with the author. Another thing needs to be mentioned in this post who have viewed it given 'haha' react. This means that the participant is successful in communicating with others through his post.

#Data 2



This is another post of the same participant. Here, the ideational metafunction is 'grieving'. Grieving over someone's death.

To describe interpersonal metafunction, the author is here an online page which is actually a fan page named Ronaldo Jr; the audience are football lovers who are fans of playing football and for who can read English.

For textual metafunction, in the first frame there is a text written in block words which is small in size and there is an emoji of red rose; as the rose is a symbol of love so maybe it has been used for showing love and respect towards the protagonist. This text and emoji is placed at the top which is indicating the ideal information and the background is white. In the second frame there is an image of the famous football player Maradona in black and white colour placed at the bottom which is giving real information. Background of this image is a winning event and is a little bit blurry as the focus is on the player who won the trophy. There is additional information in the margin where the name of the player and year of birth and death is written. This additional information is written into three different sizes as medium, large and small. To make the focus on the name of the player which is known to all is written in large size to make it eye-catching. This text is written in white colour and in block letters.

Status given by the participant sharing this post has both text and emoji. ‘It can’t be real, emoji of crying and R.I.P’ shows his love towards the player. It can be identified that this participant is a fan of football.

#Data 3



For third data, the participant has shared a meme where through ideational metafunction it can be understood that the topic of this meme is what people feel when they sleep alone at night.

For interpersonal metafunction, the author is Jannatul Ferdosi Zara and the audience is those who face difficulties while sleeping alone at night and can read Bangla.

In textual metafunction, as there are two frames in the first frame there is Bangla written text which is at the top of this meme; so it is giving ideal information that the author wants to give. It is written in black colour and to make it attractive the background is used for light ash colour. Size of the text is big.

An image can be seen in the second frame where there are three people including text. The structure of a woman is on the left side of this image. As it is on the left side so it is giving a fixed information that is general and the text is indicating the same thing. The picture of this woman is white in skin tone and the text indicating this lady as a 'ghost' is written in Bangla and white in colour and size of this text is medium. There is another picture of a woman in the center of this image and a written text indicating her as 'blanket' is brown in skin tone, the text is in white colour and medium in size. As this is holding the center position therefore it is giving the crucial information; facial expression of this lady is warning to the other lady and saving the other one. Another image of a man is found in the right side of this image and the text is indicating 'me' where facial expression is like- 'save me'. Skin tone of this man is brown and the text is white in colour and medium in size. Background of this image of a homely environment which is very mild in colour so that the pictures of people can be attractive.

So frame one and frame two are connected and give a meaning that when anyone sleeps alone at night then his/her blanket protects him/her from spooky feelings and he/she is under the shelter of blanket.

Another thing needs to be mentioned that in the right top of the corner there is something written in very small letters in English, white in colour. Actually it is the name of the author and as it is occupying a margin side of the image therefore it is giving additional meaning.

This meme has been shared with a verbal text and an emoji by the participant. She has agreed with the author by her word 'exactly' and has used the emoji of 'screaming in fear'. Through this post she is sharing her own views and feelings and is taking help to communicate through this

emoji how she exactly feels. Again, people who have reacted have given ‘haha’ react or ‘thumbs up’ which also shows that people have understood what she wants to convey.

#Data 4



A meme has been shared by the third participant, after analyzing this it can be said that the ideational metafunction of this meme is online business factors.

Interpersonal metafunction is the relationship between the author and audience and here for this meme the author is the one who has experience of online business and audience are those who have same experience and have faced or facing same difficulties; and can read Bangla.

In the first frame there is a Bangla written text which is written in big bold form in black colour and is eye-catching as the background is white, is in top position so it is ideal information. And in inverted commas the main concern has been written. In the second frame there is an image taken from a Hindi movie where the actress is warning or is angry at the actor. The background of this image says it is an event of a wedding ceremony so do the costumes of the actor and actress. Here in this image the actress is indicated to be the owner of an online business who is in an angry mood and the actor is being indicated as clients or customers who are habituated to their mistakes.

The participant has shared this post along with a status using emoji. As she has written ‘sorry but not sorry’ and has used monkey face emoji that actually means ‘not to see evil monkey’; by this emoji she actually means to convey that she doesn’t want to see these things anymore. Again she

has used another emoji that is ‘rolling on the floor laughing’. These two emoji are giving her status a true meaning of what she actually feels. And this has been understood by her friends who have reacted to her posts through ‘haha’, ‘sad’ and ‘thumbs up’. And this status has been understood by her other friends who have commented on her post. In the comment section of this post the participant herself has commented first and has used two emoji- one is ‘grimacing face’ and another is ‘rolling on the floor laughing’; these emoji have been giving her comment or verbal text a facial expression of what she prefers about her feelings. Again she has replied to one of her friend’s comment with written text and ‘face with tears of joy’ emoji. In this data lots of usage of emoji are found by the participant which actually help to reveal her personality.

By analyzing this data it is worthy to be said that this participant prefers to communicate through emoji along with verbal text and friends of her are also able to understand what she wants to say. Usage of emoji shows the impact of these on her social communication. This post and comments proves- this participant has shared something that is related to her professional life.

#Data 5



This post has been shared by the same participant where the ideational metafunction is- appreciation to women for being financially independent.

Interpersonal metafunction describes who the author and the audience are; the author is an online page of news and media website named ‘SheThePeople’ who shares a status from an Indian celebrity named Priyanka Chopra; audience of this post are women and those who can read English.

To describe the textual metafunction of this post, in the first frame there is an emoji of 'hundred points' and is mentioned to the actress so the colour is blue, this has white colour background; placed at the top which is ideal information. In the second frame there is an image of the actress in the left side and as it is situated in the left so it is the given information, facial expression is happy and confident; text is written in the right side of the image hence is indicating new information. Text size is medium and two colours are used- black and orange. Text which is written in orange colour has been given importance as it is the main concern. At bottom there is the name of the actress as a signature which is indicating real information in black colour and size is small. This framing has white colour background. The third framing has a text at the margin giving additional information which is the name of the author, written in black colour and small in size; the background is orange colour.

This post has been shared by the participant with written text and emoji of 'heart'. In the comment section, for the first reply she has used both verbal text and emoji of 'face with rolling eyes'. And for the second reply she has again used both written text and two different emoji and these emoji are 'grimacing face' and 'angry face'. As the interaction of this conversation shows that the interpretation of the usage of emoji are understood by the sender and receiver therefore emoji is working here as pragmatics. This analysis reveals that she is financially independent and is the supporter of 'women to be financially independent'.

#Data 6



In this data, ideational metafunction is motherhood. This is a shared post of the participant with a status written above it and using emoji.

For interpersonal metafunction, the author is here who has the experience of being a mom and the audience are the moms and can read English.

To analyze textual metafunction, in the first frame there is a text at the top written in black bold and block letters and the size is large; as it is at the top so it is giving the ideal information. The background here is white colour. For the second frame there is at the top a text written block letters, black in colour and medium in size. As the position of this text is top so it is the ideal information. There is an image of a mom holding her kid at the left side of this frame giving the given information. There is written text at the right side of this frame giving new information. Written Text of this part has been divided into three sections like top, center and bottom; top text indicates ideal information, text that is at center indicates important information and bottom text indicates real information; is written in small size, black colour. Another text is written at the bottom giving real information in black colour and small in size. Background for this framing is white colour. For the third framing there is text at the top written block letters, black in colour and medium in size. As the position of this text is top so it is the ideal information. Text is written at the left side giving general information. Text of this part has been divided into three sections like top, center and bottom; top text is indicating ideal information, text that is at center is indicating important information and bottom text is indicating real information; written in small size, black colour. Another text is written at the bottom giving real information in black

colour and small in size. At the right side of this text there is an image of a mother holding her kid which is giving new information. Background of this framing is white in colour.

As this status has been posted in the written form and here she has used both written text and two emoji. One emoji is of ‘a woman facepalming’ and another emoji is of ‘broken heart’. If this status is analyzed then it can be found that this participant is fond of the third framing which is known as ‘postpartum depression’. And this proves that she has shared something related to her real life.

#Data 7



This participant has shared a meme where the ideational metafunction is the difficulties faced by a teacher.

For interpersonal metafunction, the author is an online page named ‘Life of a teacher’ and has shared the post by ‘EDUPREME’. The audience are teachers and those who can read English.

To analyze the textual metafunction, in the first frame there is a text at the top which is ideal information. It is written in black colour and the size of this text is medium where the background is white. For the second frame there is an image which seems like an ancient painting and facial expression is like- ‘why me?’. There is a text slightly right side of the image so it is the real information which is written in black colour, medium in size and its background is light ash colour; and as the protagonist of this image is in the left side so it is indicating the given information. There is another text written at the margin of this image which is indicating additional information and it is the name of the original author of the post.

This post has been shared by the author without any text except emoji of ‘face with rolling eyes’ which proves that thoughts and emotions can be expressed without even using verbal text as the post has been shared via particular emoji. It can be said that as this participant is by profession a teacher so that she can relate this thing with her personal experience.

#Data 8



A meme has been shared by this same participant where the ideational metafunction is a labyrinth of passages.

For interpersonal metafunction, the author is here ‘SFFN memes’ an online page. Audience are those who are familiar with the shopping mall named Jamuna Future Park and can read English.

To describe textual metafunction, in the first frame there is a text written in black colour, placed at the top so giving ideal information, size of this text is medium and the background is white. In the second frame there is an image. In this image there is a man at the center which is giving crucial information, at the margin there is a box which the man is drawing for himself which indicates he is responsible for his own problems; as the box is placed at the margin so it is the

additional information, the colour of this box is white. There is written text in the center position giving crucial information which is small in size and white in colour and the name of the targeted place is being bold to make it eye-catching. Along with the margin there is a text which is the name of the author and written in green colour and small in size. This framing has black background of black colour.

This post has been shared by the participant with a written text and an emoji of crying face. As if she has been acquainted with the situation. In the comment section she has used for her first reply- written text and two emoji where one is ‘a neutral face’ and another one is ‘anxious face with sweat’. For the second reply she has used a GIF of a kid ‘pointing and laughing’. For the third reply she has used a sticker of ‘laughing out loud’. All of the replies indicate intimate relationship among the members due to the usage of various modes.

By analyzing all the data and the information shared by the participants it can be pointed out that all of them have shared memes or posts that can be related to their personal lives or those posts have an impact on their life. Not only that through their communication style it is proved that they are comfortable in using emoji, stickers, GIFs alongside written text. And it is related to their daily lifestyle. Even their personal and professional lives are practiced with this type of communication. Through Facebook they are communicating, practicing and performing their lives with the help of these new additions of emoji, stickers, images and GIFs. As the participants are not from the same age group so it is seen that this type of practice is being practiced by almost all ages who are using Facebook. This analysis shows the role of visual modes in their social media communication.

Chapter 5

Data from Interview

In the interview participants have shared their own point of view regarding the practice of different kinds of visual modes. The common question that has been asked to all the participants about the function of different kinds of modes and answers from them have been similar as they have responded as- expressing emotion, situation, describing liking, disliking and mood. One participant (M-17) has added to this answer- 'To express my feelings, to complete the conversation we are having' through which he is saying he prefers to use those modes to end or complete the conversation. They have agreed that their concept of shared posts, status using various kinds of modes are most of the time understood by their Facebook friends but who are not very close to them it sometimes happens they don't get the concept. As in Facebook there are lots of friends who are close to them and who are not so well known therefore the participants prefer using these various kinds of visual modes. The question 'Do you agree that using these modes can make your interaction better with your 'not face to face' communication?' has got a great response as different types of opinion have come out through their response. One of the participants (F-32) has answered this- 'There is a term in Facebook "picture for attention " Sometimes without picture people Skip your post. So I always use a beautiful picture with my post to get attention. And about the emojis I use it to express my mode coz sometimes you cannot express your tone with your words. It's absolutely difficult.' Another participant (F-30) has answered- 'These modes are definitely not a substitute of meeting in person but it definitely can show your expressions to friends staying away'. Another one (F-34) has opined 'Yes, I feel sometimes it's easy to express feelings by emoji, stickers, GIFs without using a few words. Even words could be interpreted wrong but these features are more specific than words for me.' The only one male participant has answered it in this way 'Yes of course I use them a lot. Talking about emojis, images I use them a lot it makes them everything clear. I think they are backbone for chatting. Without emojis, images chat feels so boring and I usually can't understand the meaning behind that text. Is he/she happy or not, is he/she angry.'

Their response can be summarized in this way- Emoji are used to express emotions, moods, likings, disliking and situation more specifically while communicating with others when they are

not in face to face interaction, set of emoji are become a trend to follow in social media as it is a kind of revolution in communication process, images are used for getting attentions of others, preferring different kind of modes can convey meaning of the concept, different kind of modes are used to spread positivity and fun, using modes are easy to express oneself even without saying a word, Modes are used to complete a conversation.

Through their conversation it has been found that some of the participants have used emoji while answering and sometimes have reacted to the questions which proves that these different kinds of visual modes have great impact among them and through their answers it has been proved too.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In this paper, an investigation has been conducted where the main goal is to find out the impact of different kinds of modes among the Facebook users of Bangladesh. As little study has been done for Bangladesh therefore in this paper it has been tried to make a good outcome from this research. Participants daily activities have been observed on Facebook and screenshots have been taken for data collection about what they post, what they share and their counter comments and replies regarding their posts, status; again interview has been taken via Facebook Messenger regarding their opinion that according to them what role does these modes play in interacting with others through social media. Interviews have been taken for the purpose of their motive behind using emoji, stickers, images and GIFs. Through this research- content has been analyzed and in-depth interviews have been taken and these are the types of qualitative research. As in a qualitative research method it is a matter of concern what people think and why they think and both of the answers have been enlightened here therefore qualitative research method has been applied here. And through these observations and their viewpoint it has come to the point that people are taking interest in using these modes and they find these convenient to convey their thoughts and emotions. Even they are comfortable to use these as they feel these are more accurate to express themselves. They find it interesting as these modes are colourful, more expressive for their pictorial quality, for body language and for facial expression; even they can find a suitable one to fit their conversation. Influence of these various modes can be seen on their online communication because words are found sometimes people take negatively as they are not in face to face talk but using modes can keep away this misunderstanding. Hence great influence has been found among these participants regarding using modes in different situations. In this research there are some limitations that are found and if further work will proceed in future then these limitations will be under consideration. Limitations of this research are that very few participants have participated and the number is five and only one male participant has been found participating and others are female. Further study can be conducted from this finding if the usage of emoji is gender concerned or not and the number of participants will be developed. Interview questions are not balanced because according to the answers the questions have been developed and asked. Therefore no structured or planned questions have been followed here and

this is a limitation too. Again another limitation is, all of the participants are from Dhaka city so no participant has been found from rural areas; therefore their point of view has been disregarded here as they are huge in number so a vast view has been neglected here. These will be under consideration for further work if this research gets a fruitful result.

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