

# A Pragmatic Analysis of Digital Media Stickers, Emojis and Gifs Towards Vocabulary Development

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**Abstract:** Communication is a birthright of all societies, regardless of geographical location. As the globe becomes a global village where a common language is utilised for communication via social media images, there is a need to investigate how social media images can be used to improve vocabulary for efficient communication. To achieve this objective, this paper examines several digital media images purposively selected from WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram using Grice's (1975) theory of cooperative principles in conjunction with a qualitative research design. The six digital media images employed in the study include stickers, emojis, and gifs. The study critically investigates these images using insights from cooperative principles and qualitative design to identify and explain how they have been used for effective communication when there is no appropriate word to explain and interpret them. According to the study's findings, stickers, emojis and gifs are tools that can be utilised to develop vocabulary for effective communication. The paper recommends that English instructors incorporate digital media images into their lesson plans when teaching new vocabulary. Furthermore, more glossaries on stickers, emojis, and gifs with emotions and food types from around the world, as well as living and non-living things with text attached to them for expressing their names and meaning, should be made available in order to facilitate the teaching and learning of new words thereby improving effective communication.

**Keywords:** Digital Media, Emoji, Gif, Instagram, Stickers, Twitter, Vocabulary, WhatsApp

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## 1. Introduction

The world has become a global community with one dialect and accent through the utilisation of digital media stickers, emojis and graphic interchange formats (henceforth, Gifs) in communication. One does not have to be in the same geographical location to communicate with a common language because the language of stickers, emojis and gifs is the same everywhere depending on the situation. Handwritten letters were one of the most basic means of communicating between two people in the 1990s [1]. However, semioticians have observed a shift in the semiotic landscape consequently the rise of the internet, indicating that visual communication is no longer considered secondary to text-based language [6]. Thus, there has recently been a shift away from handwritten letters and toward the current use of text messages or digital media images like stickers, emoji, and gif. Stickers, emojis and Gifs are forms of communication, particularly when used on smartphones [17]. The usage of advertisements in the age of

smartphones has expedited the transition toward visual media in daily interpersonal contact, as all learners use smartphones for reading, writing, or social purposes. It has been discovered that learners most especially young people rely on sticker, emoji and gif in communicating some thoughts to enforce meaning that words alone cannot express. When an image is placed next to a word, it creates a good mental picture of what that word means. Words alter meaning depending on context, but when an image is used to symbolize a word, the context is no longer required for understanding. This is in line with the cooperative principles that state that interlocutors should "make [their] conversation contribution such as is required, at the state of which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or the direction of talk exchange in which [they] are engage" [5].

Every communication consists of a sender, a message, a receiver, and a channel [8]. The smartphone is the communication channel in question here. The exchange of phone numbers connects interlocutors who use these smartphones. Stickers, emojis and gifs may only express the

sender's intended meaning and be accurately construed by the receiver in a shared context. To understand the intended significance of an emoji, sticker, or gif, the recipient must examine its context. Given the utility of these digital media images, this paper seeks to examine and construe the meaning of stickers, emojis, and gifs using pragmatic principles in order to demonstrate that there are numerous ways in which new words can be developed for effective communication without regard to semantic conventions.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Misinterpretation of a sticker, emoji, or gif on social media could result in the displacement of crucial information. There are principles that control interpretations of meaning in pragmatics, which are illustrated in Grice's cooperative principles using its maxims. The interlocutors must adhere to the same interpretive conventions. Interlocutors rely on this cooperation to make conversation more efficient. People always cooperate in talking with one another in an unsaid way. The problem that this study intends to address is that of communication gaps and effective interpretation of meaning that emerge when text understanding is confined to solely logical semantics. People can stray from tradition while using language occasionally [8]. The researchers of this study adopt the assumption that social media users, particularly young people, stray from grammatical norms and interpret images in a way that suits them. However, juxtaposing an image with text will inevitably result in the loss of important details and erroneous interpretation. To this end, a reader must rely on the context of use to comprehend the intention of the sender of a communication. Consequently, the current study will investigate the level of violation (if any) of the conversational principles of selected stickers, emojis, and gifs from Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter in order to construe the implications emerging from their violations.

### 1.2. Objectives of the Paper

This study intends to interpret the meaning of the selected stickers, emojis, and gifs by employing some practical approaches to reveal the implications that words cannot communicate. The objectives of this study are to explain how:

1. stickers, emojis and gifs are used to improve vocabulary development of users of communication;
2. language theory can be used to analyse selected images, interpret meanings and possibly create implicatures;
3. communication has evolved beyond just oral or written communication, that images can provide a clearer picture of words than text.

It is also worth mentioning that images can be used to interpret meaning regardless of semantic norm.

## 2. Social Media and the Use of Stickers, Emojis and Gifs for Communication

Social media is a computer-based technology in the form of websites and programs that allows individuals to create

online communities in order to exchange ideas, knowledge, private messages, images, and other content with others. These communications can take the shape of emojis stickers, or animated gifs [2]. The main Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube profiles are managed by the office of communication and marketing. Individuals can use social media to stay in touch with friends and family. Some people use the various social media platforms to network, search for job possibilities, and establish connections with people who share their interests throughout the world. The most widely used social media platforms worldwide are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok.

The rise of social media has transformed human communication and language usage. This is due to the evolution of communication beyond the use of print or text to include communicative features such as pictures, figures, stickers, emojis, and gifs. According to Capone & Mey, context is dynamic in the sense that it makes linguistic utterances intelligible. Intelligibility of linguistic expression extends beyond semantic content because humans occasionally deviate from the convention, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Furthermore, they argue that the meaning of text, pictures, figures, stickers, emojis or gifs can be deciphered by placing the word opposite the images due to the dynamism of context [2]. This paper examines social media applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as their use of stickers, emojis, and gifs in communication ranging from text messaging to WhatsApp messaging, Facebook feeds, comments, and the likes, to determine how they can be used to advance vocabulary.

### 2.1. Stickers and Their Uses

A sticker is a little piece of paper, plastic text, or a picture that can adhere to a surface. In social media communication, the meaning of a sticker has been extended to something else. It is a new form of communication that goes beyond emoji and gifs and may be shared with friends and family. Stickers come in a variety of patterns, including festivals and birthdays. Depending on the circumstances, they can be sent as text to express a specific sensation or emotion. Stickers can be used to create charming illustrations and animations. Some examples of stickers are provided below:



Figure 1. Stickers for Celebration and Good Wishes.

Stickers are the most recent kind of digital communication. They are huge format emoji that are commonly delivered as separate messages rather than incorporated into text. Stickers have a considerably greater range of expressive capacity, styles, and animation. They convey messages that writing cannot convey. The use of stickers brightens interactions. They also aid in the interpretation of emotions or facial

expressions that cannot be stated verbally. Stickers help to facilitate contact by eliminating extended discussions between interlocutors. There are other types of stickers, but this study focuses on pictographic stickers. This type of sticker is defined by [4] as collection of images similar to graphical emoticons and emojis that are curated and or personalized on instant messaging and social media applications.

## 2.2. Emojis and Their Uses

Emoji is a small digital image or icon that is used for expressing an idea or feeling. It enlivens text messages with tiny cheerful faces. Emoji is used to indicate gratitude, support, life, care, surprise, and other positive affectionate emotions. Its major role is to provide emotional clues that would otherwise be absent from a textual discourse. The following are some examples of emoji:



Figure 2. Emojis for Facial Expression.

Emoji is a pictorial and graphic sign created using Unicode. The phrase is a combination of two Japanese words that mean "picture character." The 'e' in 'emoji' stands for image, while the 'moji' stands for characters or letters. According to [10], the first emoji was designed in the 1990s by Shigetaka Kureta, a Japanese telecommunication technician who was motivated by the genre of Manga (Japanese Comic). The communicative role and influence of emojis on emotions has attracted the attention of many researchers [9, 11]. Riordan notes that in comparison to emoticons, emojis are perceived as more aesthetically appealing, familiar, clearer and meaningful [11].

## 2.3. GIFs and Their Uses

As discussed earlier, gif stands for graphics interchange format. It is a raster file format created for simple graphics that primarily appear online. It enables the combination of photos or frames to make simple animations. It can be used in the same ways as stickers and emojis to express emotions and moods. The following are examples of gif:

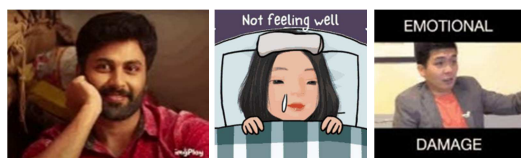


Figure 3. GIFs for Feelings and Emotion.

The usage of stickers, emojis, and gifs on social media has made writing and reading less time-consuming informally. Most animations, including the ones mentioned above, use pictures rather than words to convey meaning. A change in communication style has been noted recently, particularly

with reference to social media. It is no longer the speaker and listener who use social media platforms, but rather the sender and recipient of the message. To connect with the receiver, the sender uses messages, graphic animations, and stickers. The recipient, on the other hand, interprets the meaning within the context of the conversation.

## 3. Review of Related Literature

Many scholars have expressed interest in studies on the usage of social media images such as stickers, emojis, and gifs in communication. To begin, Sugiyams investigates how emoji, as a form of visual media, can be used to craft self-presentation and establish a friendly environment in order to retain relationships [13]. Stark and Crawford focus their study on how emojis are used as a sort of play, such that an entire conversation can consist entirely of emojis with no extra information. They notice that in a play, emojis are employed instead of words to provide a clearer picture of the meaning of the words in use, hence speeding up word understanding for both players and viewers [14]. Schneebeli evaluates the role and functions of gifs as embodied cues in another study on the use of social or digital media stickers. The study distinguishes two kinds of gifs: illustrative gifs and metaphorical gifs. These gifs serve as visual clarifications of conversations as well as expressions of emotion and affective responses [12].

In a related study, Latech et al. assess the usage of stickers and gifs in social network communication to ascertain users' goals and usage patterns. Ten users are interviewed for the study in order to fulfill this goal. The results show that the majority of the informants utilize these features frequently, with some of them preferring stickers over gifs. As regard the purpose of usage, informants send stickers or gifs to emphasize the significance of the messages they desire to share [7]. Tang et al. investigate misunderstanding using stickers in an online group discussion to establish its types, functions, and results in authentic online interactions. According to the study findings, stickers fall into two categories: as a tone indication with scope over textual message, and as a single illocutionary gesture. Furthermore, the study discovers a discrepancy between the sender's goals and the receiver's understanding, despite the fact that the discrepancy had no effect on the communication [15]. Chukaokeke and Obiamalu use Grice's conversation implicature theory to identify and characterize the many stickers employed by interactants to transmit thoughts and sentiments. The study's data consists of WhatsApp discussions among students randomly selected from Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The data show the many reasons why WhatsApp users utilize stickers to express themselves. One of these reasons is that stickers can aid to communicate some ideas in order to reinforce meaning that words alone cannot explain [3].

The research of Bamigbola focuses on the semiotic basis for the use of emoticons, emojis, and stickers in social media communication. The study aims to ascertain the extent to

which the use of emoticons, emojis, and stickers has influenced communication on social media platforms; how well students use emoticons, emojis, and stickers on social media; whether there are issues associated with the use and attachment of meaning to these devices on social media, and how such issues can be addressed. Data for the study were gathered by the distribution of questionnaires to fifty very active social media users who were chosen at random from among undergraduate students at Adekunle Ajasin University in Nigeria. The study's findings reveal that emoticons, emojis, and stickers are major tools that increase social media communication and interactions and assist in the interpretation of message among social media users [1].

According to the findings and conclusions of the preceding studies, social or digital media stickers, emoticons, and gifs play critical roles in communication. On this basis, this research examines selected social media stickers, emojis, and gifs using Grice's theory of cooperative principles in order to identify and construe the meaning hidden in these images that words cannot communicate. The next section examines Grice's theory of cooperative principles.

#### 4. Theoretical Perspectives

The notion of a 'cooperative principle' (CP) was founded on Herbert P. Grice's (1975) study on everyday communication and how we recourse to specific cooperative principles when interacting [5]. This principle underpins pragmatic approaches to language. Grice defined his cooperation principle as follows: 'Make your conversational contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged' [5]. Every act of communication, according to [5], is cooperative in the sense that interlocutors attempt to be cooperative when they communicate. The CP facilitates meaning inference by answering questions such as "What does the utterance mean?" "How does it relate to what was said earlier?" and "What is the intention behind it?"

Grice did not merely spell out his CP; he also developed a set of general conversational concepts he refers to as 'maxims,' which allow the CP to take effect. These are the quality, quantity, relation, and manner maxims [16]. According to the quality maxim, interlocutors should make true contributions rather than declare something they think to be erroneous and for which they lack enough evidence. The quantity of maxim asserts that interlocutors should contribute only as much information as is required for the current purposes and no more. According to the relational maxim, interlocutors should keep their conversation relevant and avoid altering the subject. The maxims of manner states that interlocutors should be succinct and orderly, and avoid obscurity and ambiguity of phrase.

Grice's maxims have been critiqued for failing to account for the power systems that language reflects and potentially produce. However, it appears conceivable that Grice was correct in observing that communication would be less successful in the absence of those maxims. There are also

aspects, such as 'hedges,' that we employ to soften what we say, i.e., we strive to maximize the degree of collaboration if we need to impinge on someone's unfavorable face. Furthermore, the maxims are not definitive laws; rather, they represent behaviors that are communicative and can be used as suggestions. Also, Grice considers the fact that compliance with his maxims is situational and dependent on linguistic behavior. Finally, the maxims have been lauded for their robustness [16], and Grice's cooperation principle has always been considered alongside other principles, such as the politeness principle.

In recent years, the social media has become more and more popular and people tend to express opinions, emotions and learn new words on social media using images. Analyzing vocabulary development with images using Grice's cooperative principle is an academic exercise that is worth engaging. It is important to state that some concepts in some societies do not exist and as such there is no right word to represent them. However, the true image of a concept can draw a mental picture of what the concept means. For instance, for a reader to have a good understanding when reading about snow in Nigeria where it does not exist, the image of snow has to be captured.

In communication especially among learners of the English language, to improve their vocabulary, stickers, emojis and gifs can be placed side by side with the word meaning to avoid misinterpretation by interlocutors. There is always a right word for every situation. However, in a situation where the right word does not create a good mental picture, an image can perform this function. It is against this backdrop that this paper is set to employ Grice's theory of cooperative principles known as the maxims to interpret the meaning of the selected images for communication to improve vocabulary development in English [5].

#### 5. Data and Methods

The present study employs a qualitative research method to examine social media images from WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram. WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram are social networking services that allow users of iPhone, Android, smartphone, Mac, and Windows PC to make free calls, send text messages, and exchange photos, audios, video chats, and images with people all over the world. These social media sites are available for download on any smartphone with an internet connection. Once connected, users can transmit videos, images, or comment to public or private letters, thereby creating their own words. The data for the study are stickers, emojis and gifs purposively obtained from the aforementioned social media platforms. The study examines six images (two each from emojis, stickers, and gifs) selected from WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter. These images are labeled as emoji 1 and emoji 2, sticker 1 and sticker 2, and gif 1 and gif 2. The images are labeled with the letter 'a' to indicate the sender and 'b' to identify the receiver. The study analyzes and interprets these stickers, emojis and gifs using Grice's cooperative principles.



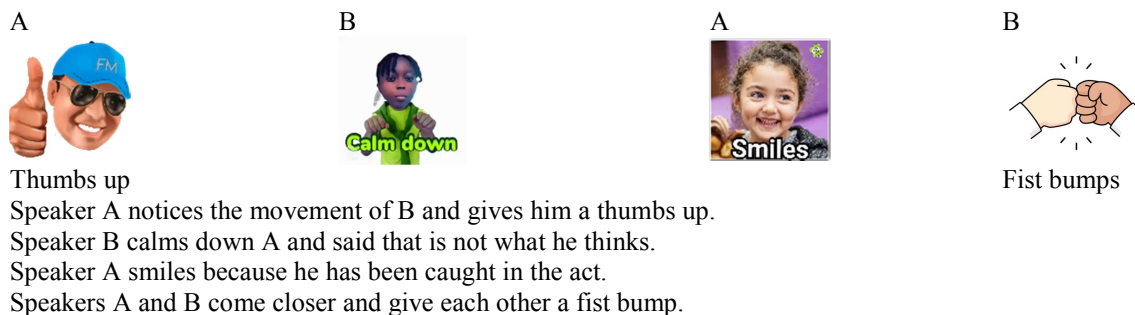
## 6. Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The data chosen for this study are examined and discussed in this section. The intention is to find out how stickers, emojis, and gifs may be used to help English language learners develop their vocabulary. The analysis begins with

the social media stickers.

### Data 1

The stickers below capture a conversation between two friends on love adventures.



**Figure 4.** Stickers indicating approval, greetings, facial expression and emotion control.

### Analysis

In language study, there are verbal and nonverbal modes of communication. Nonverbal communication is referred to as paralinguage, and it refers to a type of communication in which nonverbal clues such as signs and gestures are used to communicate. Even if no writing is associated to the sign or gesture, it can be interpreted. Text should be paired with signs in vocabulary development to provide the true interpretation of the sign both within and outside of context. Signs can mean different things to different people within and outside of context. When one encounters terms like 'fist bump' with a matching image, he or she can expand his or her vocabulary. The term and its meaning will automatically register in the reader's brain, improving his or her vocabulary development. Learning new words with visuals, such as stickers, speeds up and simplifies vocabulary development.

### Implicature



**Figure 5.** Stickers indicating child discipline, affection, exercise and salutation.

### Analysis

When discussing flogging with young children in societies where parents do not beat their children, the topic will seem hazy or abstract to them. However, showing the language learner an image of a parent or other adult caning a child will undoubtedly conjure up a mental image. It is significant to note that words have connotative meanings in some cultures. What might appear to be abuse in one community might signify a remedial action in another. For this reason, learning

The implicature of the above stickers is that the interlocutors have mutual comprehension in that they know what they are doing. Their behaviors show cooperation. However, the discussion could imply that 'B' was spotted quite close to a lady he expresses interest in and was greeted by 'A' with a thumbs up. 'B' tries to hide because he was a little distant from 'A,' but as they move closer, they greet each other very nicely with the symbol of achievement. Another interpretation that might be deduced from the stickers is that 'A' was caught red-handed and cannot refute it. The sole way to express approval is to display the fist bump symbol. The sticker and text create a distinct mental image of the meaning of the words, which cannot be forgotten quickly.

### Data 2

The next set of stickers to be examined capture a conversation between two friends.

words with visuals is essential. The denotative meaning of a term has to do with a cultural concept, but the focus of this paper is on the reader's interpretations of a word's meaning to broaden their vocabulary or deepen their understanding of it.

### Implicature

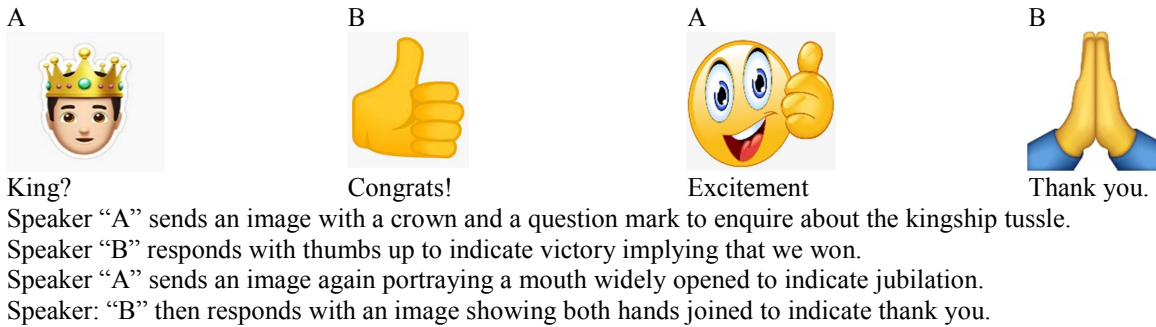
The implicature derived in the above conversation is that 'b' is hiding something from 'a' especially the reason why he is being flogged. It could also imply that 'b' understood that 'a' is not telling him the truth. The salutation sticker connotes

mockery. In other words, it suggests how could one who say that his father is showing him love be on the run? Correcting children is also evidence of love and training. In language learning, the literary meaning of words should also be separated from the semantic meaning. The inferential meaning drawn from the salutation here is disappointment. This is because speaker “a” is disappointed to his friend because he believed he is lying about the reason for his being

flogged. There are different types of meanings according to [8] but the images attached to a text like the sticker will give clearer picture of meaning.

#### Data 3

This captures the first emoji analysed in this study. It presents a conversation on kingship tussle between a father and son. The emojis used to portray this conversation is presented below:



**Figure 6.** Emojis indicating kingship, felicitation, excitement and appreciation.

#### ANALYSIS

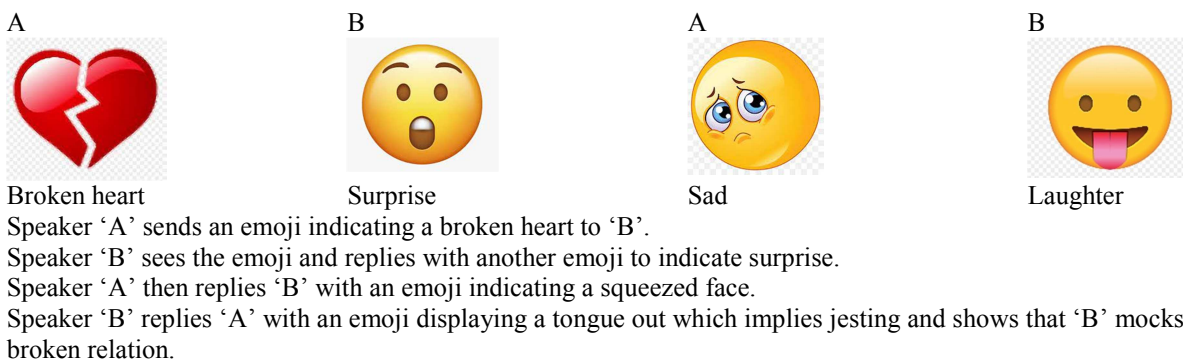
There are different rulers in every society. Some of these rulers include presidents, senators and ambassadors. To differentiate a king from every other ruler, the image of crown must be displayed. Displaying this image will enhance the English language learner's knowledge of the vocabulary used in denoting the different kinds of rulers in the society. Also, the word equivalent to the meaning of the images placed by the side of the image will give a clear picture of the meaning of the word in the English language. There may not be a suitable word to express excitement than the emoji with a thumbs up. This is because the meaning of a word and its class can change according to context. However, the text beside the images gives them a permanent meaning. The meaning of the image indicating hands joined together can be misinterpreted as prayer or pleading thereby displacing the information. This misinterpretation can be avoided if a text displaying thank you is placed by its side.

#### The Implicature

The interlocutors in this conversation have mutual understanding on the subject of discourse. Speaker ‘A’ knows that speaker ‘B’ is in a position to answer his question. The implicature drawn from the emoji used in data 3 is that there was a kingship tussle which ‘B’s father was involved. ‘A’ is worried by the tussle. However, ‘B’s father finally won the context and will be crowned king. This calls for jubilation. It is implied that ‘B’ is worried about the whole situation because he wanted ‘A’ which eventually leads to his jubilation. The communication above is well understood without construction of sentences. This implies that effective communication is possible without semantic convention or use of text. Also, a new vocabulary is possible with the use of images like emoji.

#### Data 4

This captures the second emoji analysed in this study. It presents a conversation on broken relationship between two friends. The emojis used to portray this discourse subject is presented below:



**Figure 7.** Emojis expressing negative and positive emotions.

#### Analysis

‘Broken heart’ is an abstract word which cannot describe

the feeling of one who he is being emotionally traumatized. However, to depict this kind of feeling to learners, an image

representing heart break must be placed side by side with the text. Doing this will give a vivid picture of the meaning of words before the learner. Learners of a language learn faster when the abstract word is made concrete. Most learners of English language especially the young one makes use of this emoji without knowing the right word to identify it. They only use some phrases to describe it. This adds to the knowledge of the learner's new word.

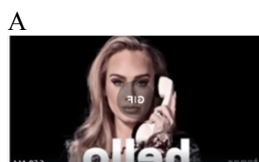
#### *Implicature*

The implicature to be drawn from this conversation is that one speaker is emotionally destabilize due to a broken heart arising from a broken relationship. This is followed by another speaker's surprised that a relationship has been broken. Next is the feeling of sadness by the speaker whose heart has been broken. Finally, the second speaker makes mockery of the speaker whose relationship is broken. From the above, it is obvious that from the conversation, 'B' is aware that an image of a broken heart is sent to 'A'. 'B' is aware that 'A' was in love with an unreliable person which

'B' trusted so much. When an image of a broken heart was sent to 'B', he responded with another image indicating surprise which might have implied that speaker 'A' trusted the person so much that she couldn't hurt him. The implicature drawn in this conversation is that 'A' was advised against the relationship. Secondly, she trusted the person she was in a relationship with. It can equally imply that 'B' knows the person, 'A' was in a relationship with an unreliable person and advised against it. 'B' was not surprised that the relationship was broken therefore the use of emoji displaying a tongue out. Anyone who is not part of the conversation can pick the message because of the meaning of the words attached to the images.

#### *Data 5*

The use of one gif in a conversation can say a lot depending on the interlocutors and their mutual agreements. Data five captures the first image of gif analysed in this study. This refers to a lady who is trying to engage her friend on a conversation.



Telephone conversation

Speaker 'A' sends 'B' a gif of a lady standing with a telephone.

Speaker 'B' replies with a gif of a lady in a bed covering herself in a blanket.



Sleeping with a blanket

**Figure 8.** Gifs indicating a girl having a telephone conversation and a girl having a siesta.

#### *Analysis*

The gif image of a lady with a telephone can be used to teach language learners not only the name of the gadget used in communication but also how it is used. The second gif image displayed a lady sleeping on a bed in blanket. New words can be made concrete and adopted for communication just like in the case of the telephone and blanket. The meanings of both images as earlier stated can be used to teach vocabulary development.

#### *Implicature*

The chat in the first image entails that the first speaker

needs attention and therefore employs the picture of telephone with the inscription 'hello there'. However, 'B', on the other hand needs not to be disturbed and as a result responds by sending an image indicating that she was asleep or not interested in the conversation been initiated by A. If she were sleeping, she would not have seen the message. The implicature generated is that she does not want to be disturbed or not interested in discussing with the sender.

#### *Data 6*

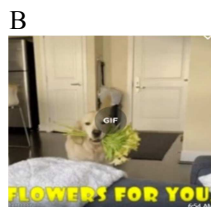
The second data to be analysed under gif presents a little boy thinking of revenge.



Gif a little boy sitting with his hands placed by his jaw and with the inscription 'I'm waiting'.

Speaker "A" sends a gif of a boy sitting down with his hands placed by his jaw with an inscription "I'm waiting".

Speaker 'B' replies 'A' with a gif of a dog holding a flower.



Gif of a dog holding a flower with the inscription flower for you.

Speaker "B" replies "A" with a gif of a dog holding a flower.

**Figure 9.** Gifs indicating expectation.

#### *Analysis*

Images of flowers and their names can aid in vocabulary

development. The image of the boy sitting down with his hands placed by his jaw and with the inscription 'I'm waiting

for you' can be used to educate younger learners about the parts of the body. These learners can increase their vocabulary by learning the different parts of the body. For learners to be able to describe the different parts of the body, they need to be shown pictures of the different parts of the body as this will help to create a permanent mental picture of such as parts in their memory. A close observation of the first image reveals that speaker 'A' is not sitting down like one who is expecting a flower but rather as one who is angry and waiting for a fight. However, the presentation of a flower to A by B can be regarded as a deviation from cooperation. It is observed that sometimes non adherence to the maxims can be as a result of jokes or expression of anger, disgust and uncertainty. In the above conversation, speaker B knows that A is not waiting for a flower. Sending him a flower can be a sign of mockery or making jest of the sender. It can also imply that A is angry with B because instead of expecting a fight from B, what he sees is a flower coming from B to apologize for a wrong committed or express love instead of war. From this implicature, it can be seen that words are built around images to create real pictures of their meaning which is the best and easiest way of learning new words unofficially. In vocabulary lessons, teachers can adopt this method in teaching new words to learners.

## 7. Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

Although Grice's cooperative maxims is not designed for examining pictorial symbols but for the fact that the symbols studied in this paper are used for meaningful communication, it is worth engaging. The findings of the study indicates that a picture is worth a thousand words where the right words are missing. For instance, no word is suitable to describe a broken heart like the emoji symbol of a broken heart which describes what a broken heart implies and as well create a mental picture of it in the minds of learners. In verbal communication, interlocutors might say one thing but mean the opposite. One has to pay attention to nonverbal elements such as body language, facial expression and tone of voice to understand the true meaning of a message. However, with images and context, the interpretation of messages becomes easy.

The Grice's maxims are useful tools employed under conversation analysis in examining social media images such sticker, emoji and Gif in communication. Although the conversations analysed in this study are mostly informal, the cooperative conventions were adopted using the maxims. The maxim of quality states that one must be appropriately informative. The images of stickers, emojis and Gif examined in this study were appropriately informative. The interlocutors employed appropriate symbols and images to demonstrate their intention and there was no deviation of any kind. The choice of images used were appropriate to the conversation which implies that the maxim of quality was adhered. Mere looking at the images, a mental picture of the

information is drawn except if one tries to analyse the message outside the conversation. The maxim of relevance states that conversation should be relevant. The images examined in this study were relevant to the conversation and thus adhered to Grice's maxim of relevance. The relevance of the images prompts the interlocutors to interpret them within their context. For instance, an image of crown was displayed with a question mark in the third data. This clearly shows that the sender asked a question and required an answer from the receiver. In other words, the symbol of a question mark placed side by side the crown suggests questioning the king. Categorically, the images adhere to the maxim of relevance. The maxim of manner states that conversation should be orderly and clear. The analysis revealed that the images examined were presented in an orderly and clear manner which make them to adhere to this maxim.

The maxim of quality states that one must make contribution that is totally true. The conversation on social media is mostly informal. By informal is meant conversation with friends and relatives which may include jokes. One cannot completely say that these conversations are totally true. The adherence to the maxim of quality here cannot be said to be the true because it is only the interlocutors that can actually say whether their conversation is true or not. The surface interpretation cannot exactly express the implied meaning. For instance, in the data analysis where one of the speakers uses the thumbs up image and the other responded with an image indicating camp down, one cannot at the surface level state the truth if they are actually set out for love adventure. It can be said that Grice's cooperative maxims analyses communication whether in spoken, written or image form. Equally, the maxim is relevant in interpreting meaning as well as creating implicatures. One does not require a dictionary to obtain the meaning of the conversation. The semantic meaning of words is no longer relevant when the images are attached with a text in a conversation. The interpretation of meaning does not require a particular training for anyone to acquire it. It is instinctive and self-developed. The most vital element in communication is feedback. The use of images or symbols through smart phones has become increasing integral to how we express care within generations as well as in the maintenance of family relationship. The production and circulation of images have become as costless and assessable as audio and text-based communication. In communication with images, the learners' level of education is not that required. What is required is an android or iPhone. The use of emoji, sticker and gif should be encouraged in communication because it is economical. It does not require the knowledge of reading and writing like in sending of text messages.

This paper examines selected stickers, emojis and gifs using pragmatic principles. The purpose is to construe the meaning of these images in order to demonstrate the numerous ways in which new words can be adopted for effective communication without regard to semantic conventions. The paper establishes that a language learner can increase his vocabulary with the use of stickers, emojis



and gifs. The paper recommends that instructors of English should adopt the use of stickers, emojis and gifs in teaching new words. Also, more glossaries on images such as stickers, emojis and gifs should be compiled with text attached to them to avoid misinterpretation of meaning. These images should not be limited to those that depict emotion but include other aspects such as food and flowers across the globe. This will aid to enhance effective communication for all.

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