

Research Article

L2 Students' Rapport Management with their Teacher Using Emojis in WhatsApp Messaging

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to find out how L2 learners used emoticons in WhatsApp messages to manage their relationship with their teacher. Twenty students and ten male and female professors provided the data needed for the study. They were chosen from among the English teachers at a Language Institute in a non-random manner. The method used in this investigation was qualitative. The researcher then collected the qualitative data using a semi-structured interview, an interview using the researcher's prepared open-ended questions. Participants were questioned regarding all of the key aspects of WhatsApp chatting using emojis. Additionally, only 20 students and 10 teachers were asked to respond to the researcher's piloted and transcribed interview questions. The duration of the interview was over ten minutes. Participants were allowed to respond in Persian, their native tongue, even though the questions were in English. Qualitative content analysis was used to examine the interview data. The primary recurring themes of the interviews were extracted through the coding of the interview data for this content analysis. It should be noted that in order to safeguard the participants' identity, their names were kept totally private. According to the results, emojis can be especially helpful in L2 courses where students can find it difficult to communicate their feelings or grasp the subtleties of a foreign language. Emojis are thought to provide emotions a visual representation, which facilitates communication between students and teachers and allows teachers to assess students' comprehension.



Introduction

The goal of using technology in EFL environments is to support the goals of teaching and learning English. As a result, students can enhance their language proficiency through the use of technology. Teachers can utilize them to help their students become more proficient in the English language. ICT (Information and Communications Technology), a term frequently used in English, is a classification of several technical types. Many educational institutions are able to oversee the usage of these internet-based technological tools due to the widespread adoption of online education. English language learning and teaching goals that aim to enhance students' performance in various skills can be accomplished with the use of the Internet (Scherer, Siddiq, & Tondeur, 2019).

In recent years, technological advancements have significantly impacted EFL teaching and learning, introducing various tools into English classrooms to enhance the educational process and create a more authentic environment for both students and instructors. However, it is essential to continuously update these tools to align with global technological progress. The widespread use of smartphones among learners and educators has demonstrated their effectiveness as educational aids. Ultimately, the goal is for students to achieve high proficiency in all four language skills (Gyimah, 2020).

The methods, approaches, and techniques for teaching and learning English have evolved significantly over time. With technological progress, educators are no longer limited to traditional tools like blackboards and textbooks for delivering lessons. The rise of online education has brought both new possibilities and challenges for teachers and students alike.

Throughout the history of EFL instruction, there have been numerous shifts in teaching strategies, methodologies, and even the roles of instructors and learners. Nevertheless, the core objective remains unchanged: to equip EFL learners with strong communicative skills in the target language, enabling them to handle real-life situations effectively (Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

Progress in EFL teaching and learning relies on the implementation of effective methods and strategies. These approaches are crucial because they help learners understand how to engage with the material, empowering them to take an active role in their education. Notably, integrating digital technologies can facilitate this process, as they are increasingly utilized by educators for diverse instructional purposes (Serdyukov, 2017).

In today's world, technology has become an integral part of daily life. Its application in foreign language education, particularly English, has garnered significant interest among researchers and learners alike. While language institutes have adopted modern tools like smartboards, audio systems, and computers, none have achieved the widespread popularity of smartphones (Gürkan, 2018). This can be attributed to contemporary lifestyles, where living without a smartphone seems nearly unthinkable—most individuals own at least one, if not two, based on their needs. Studies indicate that 64% of students use smartphones for learning (Klimova & Polakova, 2020), a figure that has undoubtedly risen in the post-pandemic era.

The use of technological tools in language education has become increasingly prominent in recent years, as educators seek to improve learner-teacher interaction through digital

platforms. Among these, WhatsApp has emerged as a particularly popular communication tool due to its instant messaging capabilities and support for multimedia sharing (Soria et al., 2020). In second language acquisition contexts, developing positive teacher-student relationships is recognized as fundamental for creating an effective learning atmosphere. This connection, often termed as rapport, encompasses mutual trust, understanding and respect between educators and learners. Research suggests that fostering such positive relationships can significantly enhance student motivation, participation, and ultimately, language acquisition success (Robinson et al., 2015).

Emojis - visual symbols representing emotions and expressions - have become fundamental elements in digital interactions, particularly on platforms like WhatsApp. These pictorial elements provide an efficient, non-verbal method for conveying feelings, perspectives, and meanings, potentially enhancing online dialogue and facilitating more effective emotional expression (Veytia-Bucheli et al., 2020). While emojis are commonly employed in casual digital exchanges, their influence on how second language learners establish and maintain rapport with instructors has received limited research attention. The current research seeks to examine how emojis affect rapport-building between L2 learners and their teachers within WhatsApp communication contexts.

Although extensive research has explored technology's role in education (Alsied & Pathan, 2000; Sadeghi & Dousti, 2013; Ratheeswari, 2018), few studies have examined how emojis influence L2 students' rapport management

with teachers in WhatsApp-based interactions, particularly in contexts like Iran. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how emojis shape teacher-student rapport in WhatsApp messaging.

While technology integration in language learning has been widely studied, and emojis are ubiquitous in digital communication, their specific role in fostering teacher-student rapport on platforms like WhatsApp remains underexplored. Existing research has largely focused on emojis in informal social exchanges, overlooking their potential in educational communication. Similarly, studies on rapport management in language learning have examined factors such as communication styles, classroom dynamics, and nonverbal cues—yet emojis' impact remains a neglected area. This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing emojis as a rapport-building tool in WhatsApp-based L2 learning.

Moreover, while prior research has investigated technology's role in language education, few studies have zeroed in on emojis within messaging apps like WhatsApp. Given WhatsApp's widespread use among L2 learners and teachers, understanding how emojis affect rapport—both positively and negatively—is critical.

Mobile devices are now indispensable in daily life, including education, with smartphones playing an increasingly prominent role in learning. However, research on this phenomenon in Iran remains limited. Building on existing literature, this study emphasizes the significance of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in rapport management within Iran's language-learning context. The main objectives of the current research are:

To examine the impact of using emojis in WhatsApp messaging on the rapport between L2 (second language) students and their teacher.

To investigate the students' perceptions and attitudes towards using emojis as a means of communication with their teacher.

To explore the role of emojis in enhancing student engagement and participation in L2 learning activities.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives mentioned, the present study tries to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What type of emojis are used to manage rapport between teachers and students as an "ice breaker"?

RQ2: How do students utilize emojis to manage their rapport with their teachers?

RQ3: How does the teacher use emojis to create relationships with their students?

RQ4: Are emojis a "universal visual language" or "socially-appropriately used" in the Iranian culture?

Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for advancing knowledge in technology-mediated language learning by investigating how emojis influence teacher-student rapport in WhatsApp-based L2 communication. The findings will offer valuable insights for language educators, curriculum developers, and researchers working in digital learning environments. By analyzing how students employ emojis to express emotions and intentions, the research can reveal effective strategies for building communicative competence and fostering positive teacher-student relationships in online settings.

The investigation into emoji usage patterns and their perceived impact on rapport will illuminate both the advantages and potential drawbacks of incorporating these visual elements in educational communication. Such understanding can guide the creation of practical guidelines for teachers to effectively integrate emojis into their digital pedagogy, ultimately enhancing student engagement and relationship-building.

The study also examines student and teacher perspectives on emoji appropriateness in academic WhatsApp exchanges, providing crucial data to address potential concerns and adapt teaching approaches. This research fills an important gap in technology-enhanced language learning literature by focusing specifically on WhatsApp - a platform widely used in L2 education yet understudied in this context.

Beyond theoretical contributions, this work has practical implications for improving digital language instruction, such as:

Develop innovative approaches to strengthen teacher-student rapport in virtual environments
Enhance target language interaction quality
Boost motivation for both learners and educators

Modernize educational practices to align with global standards

The findings will equip English teachers with evidence-based strategies for:

Improving online classroom engagement
Addressing skepticism about virtual learning efficacy
Designing more effective digital communication approaches

Furthermore, the study may inspire future research examining additional factors that influence L2 learners' e-learning experiences

and participation. Researchers could expand upon these findings to explore broader applications, such as using digital communication tools to increase motivation for English language practice.

Review of Related Literature

Rapport Management

Rapport management refers to the strategies and techniques used to establish and maintain a positive and productive relationship between individuals. In the context of students' rapport management with their teacher, it involves the actions and behaviors that students and teachers employ to build a strong connection, trust, and understanding with each other. It encompasses effective communication, respect, trust, empathy, collaboration, positive reinforcement, and setting appropriate boundaries. The goal of rapport management is to create a supportive and conducive learning environment where students feel comfortable, engaged, and motivated to learn, while teachers can effectively guide and facilitate their students' educational journey (Gonzalez, 2013).

The ultimate goal of rapport management in the context of students' relationship with their teacher is to create a supportive and conducive learning environment. When students feel comfortable, engaged, and motivated to learn, they are more likely to actively participate in class, ask questions, and take ownership of their education. Teachers can effectively guide and facilitate their students' educational journey by establishing a positive rapport. They can provide the necessary support, encouragement, and resources to help students succeed academically and personally. A strong rapport between students and teachers also promotes open

communication, trust, and mutual respect, which are essential for effective teaching and learning. The ultimate goal of rapport management in students' relationships with their teachers is to create a supportive and conducive learning environment. This environment is one where students feel comfortable, safe, and motivated to learn, while teachers can effectively guide and facilitate their educational journey (Derakhshan et al., 2022).

When rapport is established and nurtured between students and teachers, it creates a positive atmosphere that promotes engagement, collaboration, and active participation. Students are more likely to feel valued, respected, and understood, which enhances their overall learning experience. Rapport management helps to foster a sense of connection and interest in the classroom. Students with a positive rapport with their teacher are likelier to be engaged and invested in their learning. They actively participate in class discussions, ask questions, and contribute their ideas and perspectives. This engagement leads to a deeper understanding of the subject matter and promotes a love for learning (Zhang, 2023).

The rapport between students and teachers encourages collaboration and teamwork. Students feel comfortable working together, sharing their thoughts, and supporting each other's learning. Teachers can facilitate group activities and projects that promote collaboration, allowing students to learn from one another and develop important interpersonal skills. The rapport between students and teachers plays a crucial role in encouraging collaboration and teamwork within the classroom. When students have a positive rapport with their teacher, they feel more

comfortable expressing their ideas, opinions, and concerns. This trust and comfort create a safe space for collaboration, as students are more likely to actively engage in group discussions, share their perspectives, and contribute to collaborative projects (Bhatti et al., 2020).

Rapport promotes open and effective communication between students and teachers. Students feel more confident in expressing their thoughts and asking questions, while teachers actively listen and provide guidance. This open communication facilitates collaboration by ensuring that everyone's ideas and contributions are valued and respected. Rapport helps establish shared goals and a sense of purpose within the classroom. When students and teachers have a positive relationship, they can align their objectives and work together towards achieving them. This shared sense of purpose encourages collaboration as students understand the value of working together to accomplish common goals. Rapport facilitates clear and effective communication between students and teachers. Through open and honest dialogue, teachers can effectively convey the learning objectives and goals of the class. Students, in turn, can express their own goals and aspirations. This mutual understanding helps establish shared goals that align with the overall purpose of the classroom. When students have a positive rapport with their teacher, they develop trust and confidence in their guidance. This trust motivates students to actively engage in the learning process and work towards achieving the shared goals set by the teacher. Students feel supported and encouraged, which enhances their commitment

to the classroom's purpose (Padilla Cruz & Martínez López, 2012).

Rapport fosters a collaborative and cooperative environment where students work together towards common goals. Students with a positive rapport are more likely to collaborate, share ideas, and support each other's learning. This collaboration strengthens the sense of purpose within the classroom as students recognize the value of working together to achieve shared goals. Rapport allows teachers to understand their students' individual strengths, interests, and aspirations. With this knowledge, teachers can personalize the learning experience and set goals that resonate with each student. When students feel that their goals are acknowledged and integrated into the classroom's purpose, they become more motivated and engaged in their learning. Rapport building involves establishing a personal connection with students. By taking the time to get to know each student on an individual level, teachers can gain insights into their unique strengths, interests, and aspirations. This personal connection helps teachers understand what motivates and engages each student (Chen, 2022).

Rapport management encourages active listening, where teachers attentively listen to students' thoughts, ideas, and concerns. Teachers can gather valuable information about students' strengths, interests, and aspirations through active listening. This understanding allows teachers to tailor their instruction and provide relevant learning opportunities that cater to individual student needs. Building rapport involves observing and assessing students' performance and behavior in the classroom. By closely observing students,

teachers can identify their strengths, interests, and areas of growth. This information helps teachers design instructional strategies that capitalize on students' strengths and cater to their interests. With a strong rapport, teachers can provide individualized instruction that aligns with students' strengths, interests, and aspirations. Teachers can tailor their teaching methods, assignments, and assessments to meet their unique needs by understanding what motivates and engages each student. This individualized approach fosters a sense of ownership and relevance in students' learning (Yuan, 2022).

Rapport management allows teachers to collaborate with students in setting meaningful goals. By understanding students' aspirations, teachers can help them set realistic and achievable goals that align with their interests and strengths. This collaborative goal-setting process empowers students and enhances their sense of purpose in their education. By understanding students' individual strengths, interests, and aspirations, teachers can create a more personalized and engaging learning experience. This understanding helps teachers foster a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where students feel valued and motivated to reach their full potential (Sherif, 2020).

Rapport creates a sense of belonging within the classroom. When students feel connected to their teachers and peers, they develop a shared sense of purpose and identity. This sense of belonging fosters a positive learning environment where students are more likely to actively contribute to the classroom's goals. By establishing shared goals and a sense of purpose, rapport between students and teachers creates a

focused and meaningful learning experience. It enhances student motivation, engagement, and overall academic achievement. Rapport building involves establishing an emotional connection between students and teachers. When students feel connected to their teacher, they develop a sense of trust, respect, and support. This emotional connection creates a safe and inclusive environment where students feel valued and accepted, leading to a sense of belonging (Derakhshan et al., 2022).

Rapport management contributes to a positive classroom climate where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and engaging with their peers. When students have a positive rapport with their teacher, they are more likely to form positive relationships with their classmates. This positive classroom climate fosters a sense of community and shared purpose. Rapport encourages collaboration and cooperation among students. When students feel connected to their peers, they are more willing to work together, share ideas, and support each other's learning. This collaboration fosters a shared sense of purpose as students recognize the value of working together towards common goals. Rapport allows for shared experiences within the classroom. When students feel connected to their teacher and peers, they develop a sense of shared identity and purpose. This shared identity creates a sense of unity and belonging, as students feel that they are part of a larger community working towards common goals (Padilla Cruz & Martínez López, 2012).

Rapport creates a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable taking risks, making mistakes, and seeking help. When students feel connected to their teacher

and peers, they are more likely to actively participate in class, ask questions, and engage in discussions. This supportive environment enhances the sense of belonging and shared purpose within the classroom. By fostering a sense of belonging, the rapport between students and teachers creates a classroom environment where students feel connected, valued, and motivated to learn. This sense of belonging enhances student engagement, collaboration, and overall academic achievement (Chen, 2022).

Rapport building involves getting to know students on a personal level and understanding their strengths, interests, and learning styles. This knowledge allows teachers to create diverse and balanced groups for collaborative activities, ensuring that students can work together effectively and leverage each other's strengths. In collaborative settings, conflicts may arise. However, when there is rapport between students and teachers, conflicts can be addressed and resolved in a constructive manner. Rapport helps students develop conflict resolution skills, such as active listening, empathy, and compromise, which are essential for successful collaboration. By encouraging collaboration and teamwork, rapport between students and teachers enhances the learning experience. It promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, while also fostering a sense of community and support within the classroom (Yuan, 2022).

A strong rapport between students and teachers creates an environment where students feel safe and encouraged to actively participate in class. They are more likely to share their opinions, ask for clarification, and take intellectual risks. This active participation

enhances their learning and contributes to a vibrant and dynamic classroom environment. By promoting engagement, collaboration, and active participation, rapport management helps to create a classroom culture that values and respects the contributions of each student. It fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment, which in turn leads to increased motivation, improved academic performance, and a more enriching educational experience for all (Padilla Cruz & Martínez López, 2012).

In a supportive learning environment, students are encouraged to ask questions, share their thoughts and ideas, and take risks in their learning. They feel empowered to express themselves and engage in meaningful discussions with their peers and teachers. This fosters critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Moreover, a conducive learning environment allows teachers to effectively deliver instruction, provide feedback, and tailor their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of their students. Teachers can create a sense of belonging, establish clear expectations, and offer appropriate challenges to promote growth and achievement. Therefore, the goal of rapport management is to create an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. It sets the stage for a positive and enriching educational experience that supports students' holistic development and prepares them for future success. In a supportive learning environment, students are more likely to feel safe to express their thoughts and ideas, take risks, and engage in collaborative activities. They are also more likely to seek help when needed and actively seek out opportunities for growth and improvement. Ultimately, rapport management

aims to create an environment where students can thrive academically, develop critical thinking skills, and cultivate a lifelong love for learning. It sets the foundation for a positive and meaningful educational experience for both students and teachers (Sherif, 2020).

Students' Rapport Management with their Teachers

Here are five key aspects of students' rapport management with their teacher:

Communication: Effective communication is the foundation of a strong student-teacher relationship. Students should feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, concerns, and questions to their teacher. Likewise, teachers should actively listen and provide clear and constructive feedback. Students should feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, concerns, and questions to their teacher. When students feel safe and supported in sharing their ideas and opinions, it promotes open dialogue and active engagement in the learning process. This communication allows teachers to understand students' needs and tailor their instruction accordingly (Derakhshan et al., 2022).

Teachers play a vital role in effective communication by actively listening to their students. Active listening involves giving full attention to the speaker, understanding their perspective, and responding appropriately. When teachers actively listen, students feel heard and valued, which strengthens the student-teacher relationship. Teachers should provide clear and constructive feedback to students. This feedback helps students understand their strengths, areas for improvement, and progress towards their goals.

Clear feedback also helps students feel supported and motivated to continue their learning journey (Yuan, 2022).

Effective communication is a two-way process. It involves teachers conveying information and students actively participating in discussions and asking questions. When students are encouraged to ask questions and engage in meaningful conversations, it promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and deeper understanding of the subject matter. Effective communication builds trust between students and teachers. When students feel that their thoughts and concerns are valued and respected, it creates a positive and supportive learning environment. Trust is essential for students to feel comfortable taking risks, seeking help, and actively participating in class. Effective communication allows teachers to understand the individual needs of their students. Teachers can gain insights into students' strengths, challenges, and learning preferences by actively listening and engaging in open dialogue. This understanding helps teachers tailor their instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students (Zhang, 2023).

Respect: Mutual respect is essential in any relationship, including the one between students and teachers. Students should respect their teacher's authority and expertise, while teachers should treat students with dignity and fairness. Mutual respect contributes to a positive classroom climate. When students and teachers respect each other, it creates a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone feels safe to express themselves, take risks, and engage in meaningful discussions. Mutual respect builds trust and rapport between students and teachers. When students feel respected by their teachers,

they are more likely to trust their guidance and feel comfortable seeking help or sharing their thoughts. This trust strengthens the student-teacher relationship and enhances the learning experience. Teachers play a crucial role in modeling respectful behavior. Teachers set an example for students to follow by treating students with dignity and fairness. This encourages students to develop their own respectful attitudes and behaviors towards their peers and teachers (Chen, 2022).

Mutual respect is essential in maintaining a positive discipline approach. When teachers and students respect each other, discipline issues can be addressed respectfully and constructively. This promotes a sense of accountability and responsibility among students. Students and teachers create a positive and harmonious learning environment by fostering mutual respect. It enhances communication, collaboration, and overall academic achievement. Mutual respect sets the foundation for a healthy and productive student-teacher relationship, benefiting both parties involved (Bhatti et al., 2020).

Trust: Trust is built over time through consistent actions and open communication. Students should trust that their teacher has their best interests at heart and will support their academic and personal growth. Teachers, on the other hand, should trust their students' abilities and provide them with opportunities to succeed. Trust is built over time through consistent actions. Teachers should consistently demonstrate care, respect, and fairness toward their students. Teachers establish a sense of reliability and trustworthiness by consistently following through on commitments, providing timely feedback, and treating students with

consistency (Padilla Cruz & Martínez López, 2012).

Open communication is essential in building and maintaining trust. Teachers should create a safe and supportive space where students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, concerns, and questions. Teachers foster trust and understanding by actively listening, responding with empathy, and providing clear and honest communication. Teachers should provide support and encouragement to their students. Teachers demonstrate their belief in students' abilities by offering guidance, constructive feedback, and recognizing students' efforts and achievements. This support builds trust and motivates students to strive for success (Bhatti et al., 2020).

Teachers should be accountable and transparent in their actions and decisions. Teachers build trust by explaining the rationale behind their teaching methods, assessments, and expectations by ensuring students understand the reasoning behind their choices. This transparency fosters a sense of fairness and trust in the classroom. Trust is strengthened through building positive relationships. Teachers can establish rapport, get to know their students individually, and show genuine care and interest in their well-being. This personal connection builds trust and creates a supportive learning environment (Bhatti et al., 2020).

Empathy: Students' rapport management involves understanding and empathizing with their teacher's perspective and vice versa. Both parties should try to see things from each other's point of view, which can help foster a more compassionate and supportive learning environment. Understanding the teacher's perspective helps students appreciate the

decisions and actions taken by their teacher. It allows students to see the bigger picture and understand that teachers have their best interests at heart. This understanding fosters trust and cooperation between students and their teachers. Teachers should also make an effort to understand and empathize with their students' perspectives. Recognizing that students have their own unique experiences, strengths, challenges, and aspirations helps teachers tailor their instruction and support to meet individual student needs. This understanding ... creates a more inclusive and supportive learning environment (Zhang, 2023).

When students and teachers try to see things from each other's point of view, it enhances communication and collaboration. Students feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts and concerns, knowing that their teacher understands and values their perspective. Teachers, on the other hand, can adapt their teaching methods and provide appropriate support based on their understanding of students' needs. Understanding and empathizing with each other's perspectives contributes to a compassionate learning environment. Students feel supported and valued, knowing that their teacher recognizes their unique challenges and aspirations. Teachers, in turn, can provide guidance and support that is tailored to individual student needs, fostering a sense of compassion and care within the classroom (Zhang, 2023).

Collaboration: Encouraging collaboration between students and teachers can enhance rapport. Students should be given opportunities to actively participate in class discussions, group projects, and decision-making processes. This collaborative approach promotes a sense of

ownership and engagement in the learning process. By giving students opportunities to actively participate in class discussions, group projects, and decision-making processes, teachers empower students to take ownership of their learning. When students feel that their voices are heard and valued, it fosters a sense of engagement and investment in the learning process.

Collaboration promotes a shared responsibility for learning between students and teachers. When students are actively involved in the learning process, they become partners in their education rather than passive recipients of information. This shared responsibility builds rapport as students and teachers work together towards common goals. Collaboration allows for the sharing of diverse perspectives and ideas. Students who collaborate with their peers and teachers gain exposure to different viewpoints and approaches. This diversity of perspectives enriches discussions, promotes critical thinking, and encourages students to consider alternative viewpoints (Zhang, 2023).

Collaborative activities provide opportunities for students to develop and enhance their problem-solving skills. When students work together to solve problems or complete projects, they learn to communicate effectively, listen to others' ideas, and negotiate solutions. These skills are essential for building rapport and fostering positive relationships. Collaboration requires mutual respect between students and teachers. When students and teachers collaborate, they recognize and appreciate each other's contributions, ideas, and expertise. This mutual respect strengthens rapport and creates a positive and supportive learning environment. Collaboration promotes active learning, where

students are actively engaged in the learning process. Through collaborative activities, students have the opportunity to apply their knowledge, share their insights, and learn from their peers and teachers. This active learning approach enhances rapport by fostering a sense of curiosity, exploration, and discovery (Bhatti et al., 2020).

Educational Apps

Modern educational apps offer several distinctive features that have contributed to their widespread popularity:

Personal Profile Creation

Most platforms require users to establish personalized profiles containing biographical information, multimedia content (photos, videos), and social connection management tools (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). These profiles serve as digital identities within learning communities.

Virtual Learning Communities

Building on traditional online community concepts, educational apps facilitate specialized interest groups where users can connect around shared academic pursuits, such as language learning or literature discussion forums.

User Accessibility

Platforms like Knudge.me demonstrate the importance of intuitive design, offering free access and requiring minimal technical skills for account setup and navigation, making them particularly appealing to student populations.

Gamified Interaction

The integration of game mechanics in apps like Knudge.me enhances user engagement through interactive learning experiences that combine education with social connection opportunities.

Mobile Applications and Educational Context

Mobile applications have revolutionized nearly all aspects of modern life, including education. The conventional classroom model has been significantly augmented by various digital learning alternatives, with mobile apps emerging as pivotal instruments for 21st century knowledge acquisition and communication. These platforms have gained widespread adoption among educators and learners globally, becoming an essential component of contemporary education (Gilakjani, 2013).

The ubiquitous nature of technology in today's society has made digital tools increasingly accessible and integral to daily life. As Gilakjani (2013) notes, technological integration has become inevitable, with mobile applications serving as particularly effective motivators for student engagement. This is evident in the widespread use of social media platforms like Facebook for informal, topic-specific learning discussions.

In language education specifically, technology presents both opportunities and challenges for English instructors. Mobile applications have proven particularly valuable for developing core language competencies, including oral communication, writing, and reading skills (Xu & Peng, 2017). Their interactive capabilities and accessibility make them powerful tools for language acquisition and practice.

The incorporation of technological tools in foreign language instruction serves dual purposes: enhancing pedagogical efficiency for educators while improving knowledge acquisition for learners. Teachers benefit from more effective instructional methods that optimize time management, whereas students

gain access to more precise and comprehensive learning materials (Serdyukov, 2017).

A significant development in this domain is the emergence of eLearning and online education platforms, which fall under the broader category of distance learning. However, despite having the necessary infrastructure, many educational institutions in developing nations have yet to fully capitalize on these technological advancements (Serdyukov, 2017). Technology-enhanced language learning offers numerous advantages, including:

- Facilitation of the learning process
- Increased student motivation and engagement
- Enhanced opportunities for interaction and participation

Furthermore, technology provides access to authentic target language materials that are crucial for developing practical communication skills. Multimedia resources, particularly videos, serve as valuable tools for improving oral proficiency and other language competencies.

The integration of technology in language classrooms facilitates authentic communication, providing learners with both linguistic and pragmatic knowledge through exposure to real-world language use (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). Modern digital tools, particularly smartphones and computers, have become ubiquitous in daily life, creating natural opportunities for language exposure and subconscious acquisition.

Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have emerged as particularly valuable resources, enabling learners to:

- Engage in authentic discussions
- Pose questions to native speakers
- Observe natural language use
- Overcome geographical barriers (Martin & Bolliger, 2018)

However, successful implementation depends largely on teacher preparedness. As Jones (2003, p.35) notes, "Teachers' willingness to integrate technology correlates directly with their comfort level using these tools." This highlights the importance of professional development in ICT for language educators.

Pasquerilla (2008, p. 73) observed that many educators maintain a preference for traditional pedagogical approaches, with their apprehension toward information and communication technologies creating a significant barrier to classroom implementation. This resistance underscores the critical need for comprehensive professional development programs and sustained technical support to facilitate ICT adoption.

Gilakjani (2013, p. 265) emphasizes this point, arguing that "effective technology integration requires educators to fully understand its pedagogical value, practical applications, and the specific conditions that enhance learning outcomes in their particular teaching contexts."

In conclusion, the strategic implementation of ICT in modern education demands:

- Systematic planning for effective technology integration
- Provision of diverse digital tools and resources
- Comprehensive teacher training programs

Ultimately, these efforts serve the broader objective of educational modernization, ensuring schools remain relevant in our increasingly digital world.

Social networking service (SNS) and New Type of Learners

Current research indicates that "Digital Natives" or "Millennials" demonstrate distinct learning preferences characterized by:

- Active engagement in learning processes
- Strong desire for the practical application of knowledge
- Preference for informal learning environments (Bart, 2011)

As Bart (2011, p.5) notes, these learners thrive in relaxed educational settings that foster natural interactions with both instructors and peers, stating they "are more willing to pursue learning outcomes when instructors connect with them on a personal level."

The strategic implementation of social networking technologies in education has proven particularly effective for:

- Strengthening student-teacher relationships
- Enhancing instructional quality
- Increasing learner motivation
- These digital tools create learning environments where students feel:
 - More valued and recognized
 - More confident in self-expression
 - More open to intellectual challenges

Educational Applications of Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Scholars have demonstrated increasing interest in examining how SNSs impact pedagogical practices and learning effectiveness. These platforms have transcended their original social purposes to become valuable educational tools, particularly in fostering collaborative learning environments that emphasize student autonomy and problem-based learning (Mazman & Ulsuel, 2010).

Mazman and Ulsuel (2010) highlight Facebook's educational potential through its ability to:

- Connect learners across geographical boundaries
- Facilitate both spontaneous and structured learning
- Enable knowledge exchange through discussion forums
- Support collaborative project work
- Create communities of practice around shared academic interests

These features establish SNSs as dynamic learning spaces that complement traditional educational settings.

Emojis

Emojis are visual symbols that represent emotions, objects, or concepts, frequently utilized in digital communication to enrich or clarify meaning. They are commonly employed to convey feelings such as joy, sorrow, frustration, or astonishment. By incorporating emojis, individuals can add tone and context to their text-based interactions. These graphical symbols enhance the emotional resonance of a message and facilitate a better comprehension of the sender's sentiments. Emojis function as non-verbal indicators in online communication. They help mitigate the lack of facial expressions, body language, and vocal inflections that are inherent in in-person dialogues. By offering visual signals, emojis help to fill this void, adding complexity and subtlety to the written word. Furthermore, emojis can possess cultural relevance and variations. Certain emojis may hold distinct meanings or interpretations in various cultures or geographical areas. When incorporating emojis in cross-cultural

exchanges, it is crucial to consider the cultural context and possible differences. Through the use of emojis to articulate emotions, individuals can improve the tone, context, and overall clarity of their text-based discussions. Emojis offer a visual and expressive method for communicating feelings, thereby making digital interactions more captivating, nuanced, and effective (Tu, 2022).

Emojis have emerged as a universal form of communication that surpasses language barriers.

They effectively express emotions and concepts in a straightforward and visual manner, enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity of communication. Emojis serve as a visual depiction of feelings, objects, and ideas. They utilize symbols and images that are widely recognized to convey meaning, ensuring they are easily interpretable across various languages and cultures. This visual aspect of emojis facilitates rapid understanding and diminishes the dependence on written language.

Emojis are particularly adept at conveying emotions in a simple and visual way. They can express sentiments such as joy, sorrow, affection, or enthusiasm, enabling individuals to share their feelings effectively, irrespective of their language skills. This characteristic renders communication more accessible and inclusive for those who may find it challenging to articulate emotions through written text (Maa & Taguchi, 2022).

Emojis enhance cross-cultural understanding by offering a shared visual language.

They can bridge cultural divides and ease communication among people from diverse backgrounds. Emojis frequently symbolize universal ideas, such as food, animals, or common objects, fostering mutual

understanding and connection. Emojis render communication more inclusive and accessible for those with varying language skills or disabilities. They serve as an alternative form of expression that transcends written language, enabling individuals to engage in digital dialogues and articulate themselves more completely. Emojis present a broad array of choices for personalization and creativity. Users can select emojis that reflect their distinct style, personality, or cultural heritage. This customization enriches digital communication, promoting a sense of inclusivity and self-expression (Olivier, 2022).

Emojis are graphical representations of different objects, activities, and ideas. They offer a visual and succinct method to depict objects, activities, and concepts in online communication. Emojis enhance text-based conversations by adding depth, context, and visual interest, making them more captivating and expressive. The extensive selection of emojis available allows individuals to pick the most suitable representation for their intended message. Emojis often mirror cultural references and trends. Certain emojis are unique to specific cultures or regions, while others have achieved worldwide recognition. The emoji lexicon is continually adapting to reflect shifting cultural references and trends. New emojis are frequently introduced to align with users' changing needs and preferences. This ensures that emojis stay pertinent and continue to mirror the cultural landscape. It is crucial to recognize that while some emojis may carry particular cultural meanings, their interpretation can also differ based on the context and the individuals engaged in the conversation. Emojis serve as a visual language

that facilitates cross-cultural communication and comprehension, enhancing the richness and depth of digital interactions (Nenasheva, 2023).

Emojis are continually evolving and expanding to encompass a broader spectrum of emotions, objects, and concepts. Regular additions of new emojis are made to cater to the changing needs and preferences of users. Furthermore, initiatives have been undertaken to enhance diversity by incorporating emojis that represent various skin tones, genders, and professions. The existing set of emojis is frequently updated to depict a wider array of emotions, objects, activities, and concepts. This expansion guarantees that users have a diverse selection to choose from when expressing themselves. For instance, new emojis may feature representations of specific animals, foods, sports, or cultural symbols. Efforts have been directed towards fostering diversity and inclusivity within emojis. This encompasses the introduction of emojis with varying skin tones, reflecting a multitude of racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, emojis now offer options for different genders, occupations, and family structures, facilitating more inclusive representation in digital communication (Tu, 2022).

Moreover, emojis have been broadened to include symbols and icons that advocate for accessibility and inclusivity. This includes emojis that depict individuals with disabilities, such as those using wheelchairs, hearing aids, or guide dogs. These emojis contribute to ensuring that digital communication remains accessible and inclusive for all users. The introduction of new emojis is frequently shaped by user feedback and preferences. Proposals for emojis are evaluated and considered based on their

popularity and relevance to the needs of users. This user-centered approach guarantees that emojis continue to mirror the evolving demands and preferences of the digital communication landscape. Additionally, emojis aim to reflect cultural significance and global trends. This includes the incorporation of emojis that symbolize specific cultural practices, celebrations, or icons. The integration of culturally significant emojis enhances digital communication by fostering inclusivity and enabling individuals to convey their cultural identity or refer to specific cultural aspects. The continuous evolution and expansion of emojis contribute to a more diverse, inclusive, and expressive experience in digital communication. By mirroring the changing needs and preferences of users, emojis further enrich the depth and subtlety of text-based conversations (Maa & Taguchi, 2022).

The interpretation of an emoji can differ based on the context and the individual utilizing it. Various individuals may perceive emojis in distinct ways, making it essential to take into account the context and the relationship between the sender and the recipient. In summary, emojis hold a crucial position in digital communication by introducing visual components, enhancing emotional expression, and promoting cross-cultural understanding (Olivier, 2022).

Review of Relevant Literature on Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

Tragant et al. (2022) conducted a five-week study examining WhatsApp usage among 23 EFL learners participating in an intensive summer program. Their qualitative analysis of

764 messages revealed two distinct communication patterns:

Task-oriented interactions (initially dominant but decreasing over time)

Informal social exchanges (increasing progressively, totaling 289 messages)

Notably, while formal language negotiation was limited, both interaction types effectively extended English practice beyond classroom boundaries, with informal exchanges demonstrating more spontaneous, symmetrical communication featuring text messaging conventions.

Complementing this, Alshammari et al. (2017) explored Saudi Arabian stakeholders' perspectives on WhatsApp for EFL instruction, identifying three primary applications:

Information dissemination

Language skill development

Peer learning facilitation

Their findings revealed generally positive attitudes among students and faculty, though some instructors expressed concerns about appropriate usage boundaries. The researchers advocate for structured implementation frameworks balancing learner autonomy with faculty comfort levels.

Technology Integration Outcomes

Comparative studies demonstrate superior outcomes for technology-enhanced instruction:

Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) found significantly better academic performance among students using digital tools versus traditional methods. Aşıksoy (2018) reported strong learner awareness and positive attitudes toward language learning technologies, particularly for listening skill development.

Seraji et al. (2017)'s survey of 100 Iranian teachers revealed significant correlations

between technology adoption and: Teaching experience, Job tenure, Educator age. Similarly, Ndibalema (2014) identified a paradoxical situation in Tanzanian secondary schools where positive teacher attitudes toward ICT failed to translate into effective classroom implementation, primarily due to inadequate technological familiarity.

While existing scholarship has explored various digital communication aspects, no studies have specifically investigated how emojis mediate teacher-student rapport development in L2 WhatsApp interactions. Addressing this gap could yield valuable insights regarding: Emoticons' role in relationship-building, Cross-cultural interpretation differences, Long-term pedagogical impacts. Such research would inform best practices for incorporating visual elements in digital language instruction to optimize learning experiences and outcomes.

Method

Participants

The information necessary for the research was collected from 10 male and female educators and 20 students. These individuals were chosen non-randomly from a pool of English teachers at a Language Institute. They instruct English at both intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. The ages of the participants varied from 20 to 45 years. EFL instructors with diverse experiences and varying academic qualifications, including Bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees, and Doctoral degrees in teaching English as a Foreign Language, were invited to take part in this research.

Table 1
Demographic information of Teacher Participants

Gender	Academic Level	Teaching Experience
Male	Bachelor's	High
Female	Master's	Medium
Male	Doctoral	Low
Female	Bachelor's	High
Male	Master's	Medium
Female	Doctoral	Low
Male	Bachelor's	High
Female	Master's	Medium
Male	Doctoral	Low
Female	Bachelor's	High

Furthermore, the participants in the study consisted of 20 male and female EFL learners aged between 15 and 18, all possessing intermediate language proficiency. The selection of participants was conducted using convenience sampling, a non-random sampling method where the sample is drawn from a readily accessible population. These learners have been engaged in English studies for five years, attending two-hour English courses twice a week at a language institute for each session.

Table 2
Demographic information of Learner Participants

Gender	Age Range	Language Proficiency	Years of English Study
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years

Gender	Age Range	Language Proficiency	Years of English Study
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Male	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years
Female	15-18	Intermediate	Five Years

Instruments

Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was conducted to gather qualitative data. The researcher created an interview featuring open-ended questions, which were formulated based on a mix of existing literature and the researcher's own reinterpretation. It is standard practice to develop research questions after reviewing pertinent literature in the field, allowing the researcher to pinpoint gaps in current knowledge and create questions that address those gaps. To ensure the interview questions were valid, they were reviewed by several experts in the field to confirm their relevance, clarity, and alignment with the research goals. This expert validation enhances the credibility of the questions and increases the chances of obtaining significant results. Participants were asked about their use of emojis in WhatsApp messaging. To establish the validity and reliability of the five-question interview, three domain experts from the university verified its soundness. Furthermore, the interview was tested on five EFL learners who were not part of the study group before the research to further confirm its validity and reliability. Once the interview questions were deemed clear and comprehensible, they were approved for use concerning emojis in WhatsApp messaging.

Data collection

After obtaining informed consent from the participants, they were informed about the purpose of the study, and any ambiguity regarding the questions were resolved. The participants were provided with the researcher's phone number and email address in case they had any further questions. Then, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview to collect the qualitative data. An interview composed of open-ended questions prepared by the researcher. Participants were asked about all the main factors of using emojis in WhatsApp messaging. Moreover, 10 teachers and just 20 students were required to answer the researcher-made interview questions, which were piloted and transcribed. The interview lasted for almost 10 minutes. The questions were in English, but the participants were free to answer in their native language, Persian. The interview data was analyzed through qualitative content analysis. This content analysis was conducted by coding the interview data to extract the main recurring themes of interviews. It is worth noting that the participants' names were completely confidential to protect their identities.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed from the interviewees by open and axial coding. Open and axial coding are used in interview analysis to systematically analyze and interpret qualitative data, allowing researchers to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within the data. These coding techniques provide a structured approach to data analysis and help in generating meaningful insights from interview data. In fact, the responses of the participants to interview questions were examined qualitatively and

thematically. Their answers were transcribed, summarized, and categorized first. As a result of this classification, recurrent patterns in the participants' responses were identified. The recurrent themes and patterns in the transcriptions were grouped together. According to the interview questions, the themes and patterns were organized. Following that, all of the patterns were carefully classified in order to describe the key themes in the interview data. Member checking, also known as analyst triangulation, was used to enhance the confirmability of research findings. It involved involving another expert or member of the research team to review and validate the analysis conducted by the primary researcher. This process helped to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the analysis by reducing potential biases and errors.

Results

Addressing the First Research Question

The first research question of the present study was: What type of emojis are used to manage rapport between teachers and students as an "ice breaker"? The aim of the research question is to investigate the role of emojis in establishing and maintaining rapport between teachers and students in an educational setting. Specifically, the research aims to explore what type of emojis are utilized to break the ice and create a positive and engaging environment for interaction between teachers and students. By examining the use of emojis in this context, the research seeks to understand their impact on rapport-building and the overall dynamics of teacher-student relationships.























The following Table presents a descriptive analysis of the usage of emojis in various conversations. The table includes information on the emoji picture, emoji name, the number of conversations in which the emoji was used, the number of conversations in which the emoji was used repeatedly, the total number of times the emoji was used, and its meaning in text. This

analysis aims to provide insights into the frequency and patterns of emoji usage, shedding light on their role in communication. By analyzing the data presented in this table, we can gain a better understanding of how emojis are utilized in different contexts and their significance in conveying emotions and messages in text-based conversations.











Table 3























Descriptive Analysis of Using Emojis

Meaning in text	Total number of use	In a number of conversations used repeatedly	In a number of Conversations used	Name	Emoji	Emoji picture
Widely used to show something is funny or pleasing. Named the Oxford Dictionaries 2015 Word of the Year, and the most used emoji on all platforms from 2011-2021.	95	27	54	face with tears of joy emoji	😄	😄
May convey inconsolable grief but also other intense feelings, such as uncontrollable laughter, pride or overwhelming joy. In March 2021, 😭 Loudly Crying Face became the most popular emoji on Twitter. It held this position until January 2022, when 😄 Face with Tears of Joy returned as the top emoji on the platform.	91	11	67	Loudly crying face emoji	😭	😭
In emoji form, this is most commonly used for love, affection, romance and positive intentions.	63	13	43	Heart suit emoji	♥	♥
Often conveys general pleasure and good cheer or humor.	47	1	1	Grimacing face emoji	😬	😬
A classic smiley. A yellow face with a modest smile, rosy cheeks, and soft, closed eyes. Many platforms, including Apple, feature relaxed eyebrows. Conveys a wide range of warm, positive feelings, including love, happiness, and gratitude.	41	2	39	Smiling face emoji	😊	😊
Often used to represent a sense of fun or as a positive affirmation	41	12	19	Women dancing emoji	🕺	🕺
Commonly used for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and other special occasions. May be more generally used to express such ideas as love and beauty.	38	6	31	Cherry Blossom emoji (pink flower)	🌸	🌸

Meaning in text	Total number of use	In a number of conversations used repeatedly	In a number of Conversations used	Name	Emoji	Emoji picture
Often used as a playful way to convey a laughing, disbelieving, cringing <i>I can't believe what I'm seeing!</i> or <i>I can't bear to look!</i>	34	11	17	See no Evil monkey		
Often expresses genuine happiness and warm, positive feelings.	26	3	23	Smiling face with smiling eyes emoji		
furrowed eyebrows, a small frown, and large, "puppy dog" eyes, as if begging or pleading. May also represent adoration or feeling touched by a loving gesture. At its peak the Pleading Face was the third most popular emoji used on Twitter	25	6	11	Pleading face emoji		
Two hands clapping emoji, which when used multiple times can be used as a round of applause.	25	6	7	Clapping hands emoji		
Intended to depict nerves or discomfort but commonly used to express a close call, as if saying Whew! and wiping sweat from the forehead.	18	2	15	Grinning face with sweat emoji		
Often conveys enthusiastic feelings of love, infatuation, and adoration, e.g., I love/am in love with this person or thing.	18	4	12	Smiling face with heart-eyes emoji		
A hand shown pressing against the head of a person, commonly written as facepalm. Used to display frustration or embarrassment at the ineptitude of a person or situation.	18	5	9	Women facepalm (medium dark skin)		
Two hands placed firmly together, meaning please or thank you in Japanese culture. A common alternative use for this emoji is for prayer, using the same gesture as praying hands. It can also represent a respectful greeting or show of adoration many in Southeast Asian religions and cultures	16	0	16	Folded hands Emoji		
Expresses a range of happy, affectionate feelings, especially being in love.	14	0	14	Smiling face with 3 heart emoji		
May represent a kiss goodbye or good night and convey feelings of love and affection more generally.	13	3	8	Face blowing a kiss emoji		
A white heart emoji, used for love and affection. Also commonly used to discuss someone passing away.	12	0	12	White Heart emoji		

Meaning in text	Total number of use	In a number of conversations used repeatedly	In a number of Conversations used	Name	Emoji	Emoji picture
Commonly used to indicate various positive sentiments, including love, happiness, beauty, gratitude, and excitement, as well as newness or cleanliness. May also be used as a form of ✨emphasis	12	0	12	Sparkles emoji	✨	✨
Two hands raised in the air, celebrating success or another joyous event.	12	0	12	Raising Hands: Light Skin Tone	🙌	🙌
Its expression evokes Edvard Munch's iconic painting The Scream. While intended to represent horror and fright, it commonly conveys such feelings as shock, awe, disbelief, and intense excitement, as a screaming fan.	11	2	3	Face Screaming in Fear	😱	😱
Often expresses a radiant, gratified happiness. Tone varies, including warm, silly, amused, or proud.	9	1	8	Beaming Face with Smiling Eyes	😊	😊
An arm flexing to show its biceps muscle. Represents strength, or working out.	9	2	5	Flexed Biceps: Medium-Light Skin Tone	💪	💪
Used for celebrating joyous occasions (such as New Year's) and enjoying good times more generally.	9	2	4	Partying Face	🥳	🥳
Commonly used for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and other special occasions. May be more generally used to convey such ideas as love, appreciation, and happiness.	7	0	7	Blossom Emoji (White flower)	🌸	🌸
A hand waving most commonly used to say "hello" or "goodbye." This emoji can be used to convey a sense of not being friends any more when used on WeChat in China.	7	1	5	Waving Hand: Medium-Light Skin Tone	👋	👋
Often conveys hysterical laughter more intense than 😄 Face With Tears of Joy.	6	0	6	Rolling on the Floor Laughing	🤣	🤣
May express that someone or something is amazing, fascinating, impressive, or exciting.	5	1	3	Star-Struck	🌟	🌟
May be used to offer thanks and support, show love and care, or express warm, positive feelings more generally.	5	1	4	Smiling Face with Open Hands	🙏	🙏
Due to its hand gesture, often used to represent jazz hands, indicating						

Meaning in text	Total number of use	In a number of conversations used repeatedly	In a number of Conversations used	Name	Emoji	Emoji picture
such feelings as excitement, enthusiasm, or a sense of flourish or accomplishment.	5	0	5	Check Mark Button	✓	
Often conveys general happiness and good-natured amusement. Similar to 😊 Grinning Face but with taller, more excited eyes.	4	1	3	Grinning Face with Big Eyes	😊	
Often conveys excitement or hearty laughter. Similar to 😊 Grinning Face but with eyes that might say Squee! or Awesome!	4	0	4	Grinning Squinting Face	😏	
Conveys various pleasant feelings, including contentment, calm, peace, and relief. May also convey feelings of happiness or good-natured humor more generally.	3	0	3	Relieved Face	😌	
While this emoji is often used by people calling themselves nerds in a self-deprecating way, the nerdy glasses paired with buck teeth can, and often does, evoke anti-Asian stereotypes. The fact that the default color of emoji faces is yellow further pushes this emoji into racist "yellowface" territory.	3	0	3	Nerd Face	🤓	
A thumbs-up gesture indicating approval.	3	0	3	Thumbs Up	👍	
May represent a range of negative or tense emotions, especially nervousness, embarrassment, or awkwardness (e.g., Eek!).	3	0	3	Grimacing Face	😬	
Commonly conveys sentiments of love and affection.	3	1	1	Kissing Face with Smiling Eyes	😘	
May signal a joke, flirtation, hidden meaning, or general positivity. Tone varies, including playful, affectionate, suggestive, or ironic. Not to be confused with the more mischievous or sexual 😏 Smirking Face.	2	0	2	Winking Face	😉	
Represents "I'm okay" or "yes, that's correct / good." In American Sign Language (ASL), the number nine is represented with this gesture. The same hand sign can be seen as offensive in some cultures, including in parts of	2	0	2	OK Hand: Medium Skin Tone	👌	

Meaning in text	Total number of use	In a number of conversations used repeatedly	In a number of Conversations used	Name	Emoji	Emoji picture
Europe, the Middle East, and South America. This can also be used as a symbol of White Supremacy, depending on context.						
Used for various content concerning the Christmas holiday and season as well as for wintertime more generally.	2	0	2	Christmas Tree		
Can be used to express a wide range of emotions and expressions including gratitude, tender happiness, an attempt to look happy when actually sad, or smiling through pain. Can also be a response to something that is bittersweet.	2	1	1	Smiling Face with Tear		
Meaning widely varies, but commonly conveys a moderate degree of sadness, pain, frustration, or disappointment	2	1	1	Downcast Face with Sweat		
Commonly used for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and other special occasions. May be more generally used to express such sentiments as love, appreciation, and happiness. Also used in association with the Netherlands and as a pink accent color.	2	0	2	Tulip		
May also represent boredom (slang, snooze). to convey sleep or sleepiness.	2	0	2	Sleeping Face		
Commonly used for various metaphorical senses of star (e.g., for fame, success, excellence, reviews). Also used for emphasis or flair. Occasionally used for astronomical stars.	2	0	2	Star		
May signal a joke, flirtation, hidden meaning, or general positivity. Tone varies, including playful, affectionate, suggestive, or ironic. Not to be confused with the more mischievous or sexual 😏 Smirking Face.	2	0	2	Winking Face		
Often used to convey flirtation or sexual innuendo.	2	0	2	Smirking Face		
A cartoon cat variant of 😭 Crying Face.	2	1	1	Crying Cat		
Intended to give the impression of a heart increasing in size.	1	0	1	Growing Heart		
	1	0	1	Right Arrow		

Meaning in text	Total number of use	In a number of conversations used repeatedly	In a number of Conversations used	Name	Emoji	Emoji picture
s if saying Wow! or Oh my! May convey such feelings as awe or disbelief, often milder or more ironic in tone than 😱 Face Screaming in Fear.	1	0	1	Face with Open Mouth	😮	😮
Commonly used to convey irony, sarcasm, joking, or a sense of goofiness or silliness. Its intent can be similar to the bemused Oh well! of 🙄 Person Shrugging	1	0	1	Upside-Down Face	🙄	🙄
This emoji represents the aching one feels when they are missing the person they love.	1	0	1	Broken Heart	💔	💔
May also express a confident, carefree attitude or that something is excellent.	1	0	1	Smiling Face with Sunglasses	😎	😎
	1	0	1	Honeybee	🐝	🐝
	1	0	1	Rabbit Face	🐰	🐰
Used broadly to represent writing. Also used between words to show that a lesson is being learned and to indicate someone is taking notes	1	0	1	Writing Hand	✍️	✍️
Sometimes used in the context of shouting or mansplaining.	1	0	1	Speaking Head	🗣️	🗣️
Used for a wide range of content dealing with money, including: making money, loving wealth, being or feeling rich, and concepts of success and excellence (e.g., on the money).	1	0	1	Money-Mouth Face	👄	💰
May be worn to avoid sickness or spreading airborne diseases.	1	0	1	Face with Medical Mask	😷	😷
Commonly used to represent gifts and presents on various holidays, celebrations, and special occasions.	1	0	1	Wrapped Gift	📺	📺
Commonly conveys sentiments of romantic love and affection.	1	0	1	Kissing Face with Closed Eyes	😘	😘
Commonly used to represent sunny, warm, or hot weather, light, heat, energy, life, outer space, astronomy, and various positive and happy (sunny) feelings.	1	0	1	Sun	☀️	☀️

The table provides information about various emojis, including their names, the number of times they have been used in conversations, the number of times they have been used repeatedly, the total number of uses, and their

meanings in text. 😊 (face with tears of joy emoji) is the most widely used emoji, with a total of 95 uses. It is commonly used to show something is funny or pleasing. 😭 (loudly crying face emoji)

is the second most used emoji, with a total of 91 uses. It can convey intense feelings such as grief, laughter, pride, or overwhelming joy. ♥ (heart suit emoji) is the third most used emoji, with a total of 63 uses. It is commonly used to express love, affection, romance, and positive intentions. 😄 (grinning face emoji) is the emoji with the highest number of repeated uses (27 out of 47 total uses). It often conveys general pleasure, good cheer, or humor. 🌸 (cherry blossom emoji) is commonly used for special occasions like Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, as well as to express ideas of love and beauty. 🙄 (see no evil monkey emoji) is often used playfully to convey a sense of disbelief or cringing at something. ☹️ (pleading face emoji) is often used to represent furrowed eyebrows, a small frown, and large "puppy dog" eyes, conveying a sense of begging, pleading, adoration, or feeling touched by a loving gesture. 🙌 (clapping hands emoji) is often used as a round of applause when used multiple times. 😓 (grinning face with sweat emoji) is intended to depict nerves or discomfort but is commonly used to express relief or a close call. 😍 (smiling face with heart-eyes emoji) often conveys enthusiastic feelings of love, infatuation, and adoration.

Emojis are graphical symbols that can convey various meanings and functions in text-based communication. According to Table 4.1, emojis expressed the speaker's attitude or emotion toward the topic or the listener, such as 😄 for amusement, 😞 for sadness, or ♥ for love. Emojis can modify the intensity of the speaker's attitude or emotion, such as adding more hearts or tears to show more love or sorrow. Emojis indicate the speaker's intention or purpose of the utterance, such as 🙏 for request or gratitude,

👏 for praise or applause, or 🙄 for disbelief or embarrassment. Emoji can create or enhance a humorous effect, such as using 😏 to show irony or sarcasm, or using 🙄♀️ to mock oneself or others. Emoji can signal a contrast between what is said and what is meant, such as using 😏 to show dislike or contempt or using ✖️ to show disappointment or boredom.

Addressing the Second Research Question

The second research question of the present study was: How do students utilize emojis to manage their rapport with their teachers? The researcher used interview to gather the data to answer this research question. The interview aimed to understand the students' perspectives and attitudes toward using emojis to manage their rapport with their teachers. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, all of the interviews were analyzed. The analysis of data gathered from interviews produced major responses related to the objectives of the study. The researcher conducted interviews to gather data and answer a specific research question. The purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into the perspectives and attitudes of students regarding the use of emojis to manage their rapport with their teachers. To achieve the objectives of the study, all of the interviews were analyzed. This analysis of the data collected from the interviews resulted in significant responses that were directly related to the objectives of the study.

In my opinion, students utilize emojis as a means to manage their rapport with their teachers in various ways. Firstly, emojis can be used to convey emotions and tone in online communication. When students use

emojis, they can express their feelings, such as gratitude, enthusiasm, or even empathy, which helps to establish a positive and friendly rapport with their teachers. Emojis also serve as a tool for nonverbal communication, allowing students to add context and nuance to their messages. For example, a smiling face emoji can indicate that a student's comment or question is meant in a lighthearted or friendly manner. This helps to create a more relaxed and approachable atmosphere between students and teachers.

According to the participant's response, the use of emojis by students is a means to manage their rapport with their teachers. It highlights two main functions of emojis in online communication: conveying emotions and tone, and serving as a tool for nonverbal communication. The first point made is that emojis can be used to express emotions and tone in online communication. Using emojis, students can convey their feelings, such as gratitude, enthusiasm, or empathy, which helps establish a positive and friendly rapport with their teachers. Emojis visually represent emotions that may not be easily conveyed through text alone. The second point is that emojis serve as a tool for nonverbal communication, allowing students to add context and nuance to their messages. For instance, a smiling face emoji can indicate that a student's comment or question is meant in a lighthearted or friendly manner. This helps to create a more relaxed and approachable atmosphere between students and teachers.

In my opinion utilize emojis as a way to manage their rapport with their teachers in online communication. Emojis allow us to express emotions, convey tone, and add a personal touch to our messages. By using emojis, we can create a more friendly and engaging atmosphere with our teachers. One way we use emojis is to show appreciation or gratitude. For example, when a teacher provides helpful feedback or guidance, we might respond with a thumbs-up emoji or a smiley face to express our thanks. This helps to build a positive rapport and acknowledges the teacher's efforts.

In this excerpt of the interview, the participant discusses the use of emojis as a means to manage rapport with teachers in online communication. The student believes that emojis serve as a tool for expressing emotions, conveying tone, and adding a personal touch to messages. By utilizing emojis, the student suggests that a more friendly and engaging atmosphere can be created between students and teachers. The participant provides an example of how emojis can be used to show appreciation or gratitude towards teachers. When a teacher offers helpful feedback or guidance, the student suggests responding with a thumbs-up emoji or a smiley face to express thanks. This act not only helps to build a positive rapport but also acknowledges the efforts made by the teacher.

Emojis also help us convey our emotions and intentions more effectively. If we're asking a question or making a suggestion, we might use a raised hand emoji or a lightbulb emoji to indicate our engagement and enthusiasm. This can encourage open and interactive

communication with our teachers. Furthermore, emojis can be used to bridge the gap between formal and informal communication. By incorporating emojis into their messages, students can create a more casual and relatable tone, which can foster a sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding with their teachers. This can be particularly helpful in building a comfortable and supportive learning environment.

According to the participant's response, the author discusses the role of emojis in enhancing communication between students and teachers. The author highlights two main benefits of using emojis: conveying emotions and intentions effectively and bridging the gap between formal and informal communication. The first benefit mentioned is that emojis help convey emotions and intentions more effectively. By using emojis such as a raised hand or a lightbulb, individuals can indicate their engagement and enthusiasm when asking a question or making a suggestion. This can encourage open and interactive communication with teachers, as it provides a visual representation of the participant's emotions and intentions. The second benefit discussed is the ability of emojis to bridge the gap between formal and informal communication. Incorporating emojis into messages can create a more casual and relatable tone, which can foster a sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding between students and teachers. This can be particularly helpful in building a comfortable and supportive learning environment.

I believe that, emojis can be used to lighten the mood or add humor to our conversations. When appropriate, we might use a laughing face emoji or a playful emoji to show that we're not taking ourselves too seriously and to create a more relaxed and enjoyable learning environment. However, it's important to use emojis in moderation and consider the context and the preferences of our teachers. Some teachers may prefer more formal communication, so we need to be mindful of that. It's also important to choose emojis that are appropriate and respectful, avoiding any that could be misinterpreted or deemed unprofessional.

The participant explains the use of emojis in conversations, particularly in the context of creating a more relaxed and enjoyable learning environment. The participant believes that emojis can be used to lighten the mood and add humor to conversations. They suggest using laughing face emojis or playful emojis to show that they are not taking themselves too seriously. However, the participant also emphasizes the importance of using emojis in moderation and considering the context and preferences of teachers. They acknowledge that some teachers may prefer more formal communication, so it is necessary to be mindful of that. Additionally, the participant highlights the importance of choosing appropriate and respectful emojis, avoiding any that could be misinterpreted or deemed unprofessional.

As a student, emojis play a significant role in managing rapport with my teachers. Since English is not my first language, emojis provide a way for me to express my emotions and intentions more clearly in online

communication. One way I utilize emojis is to show appreciation and gratitude towards my teachers. When they provide helpful feedback or support, I often use emojis like a thumbs-up or a smiley face to convey my thanks. This helps to establish a positive and friendly rapport with my teachers, even if we are not physically present in the same classroom.

In this excerpt, the student discusses the importance of emojis in their communication with teachers as a student. They explain that since English is not their first language, emojis serve as a tool to express emotions and intentions more effectively in online communication. The student mentions that they use emojis to show appreciation and gratitude towards their teachers. Specifically, they use emojis like a thumbs-up or a smiley face to convey thanks when receiving helpful feedback or support. By doing so, they aim to establish a positive and friendly rapport with their teachers, even in the absence of physical presence in the same classroom. Therefore, the student recognizes the value of emojis in enhancing their communication with teachers, allowing them to express emotions and intentions more clearly and establish a positive relationship.

In my opinion, emojis also help me to convey my understanding or confusion in a text-based conversation. For example, if I have a question or need clarification, I might use a puzzled face or a raised hand emoji to indicate that I need further explanation. This allows me to seek help and engage in a more interactive dialogue with my teachers. Moreover, emojis assist me in expressing my enthusiasm and engagement in the learning

process. When I find a topic interesting or enjoyable, I often use emojis like a fire symbol or a smiling face with heart eyes to show my excitement. This helps to create a positive and motivating learning environment with my teachers. However, as an EFL learner, I am cautious about using emojis appropriately and in moderation.

In this excerpt of the interview, the student discusses their opinion on how emojis can be useful in text-based conversations. They mention that emojis help them convey their understanding or confusion in a conversation. For instance, they might use a puzzled face or a raised hand emoji to indicate that they need further explanation or clarification. This allows them to seek help and engage in a more interactive dialogue with their teachers. The participant also states that emojis assist them in expressing their enthusiasm and engagement in the learning process. They use emojis like a fire symbol or a smiling face with hearty eyes to show their excitement when they find a topic interesting or enjoyable. This helps to create a positive and motivating learning environment with their teachers. However, the participants mentioned that they are cautious about using emojis appropriately and in moderation. This suggests that they are aware of the importance of using emojis in a balanced and suitable manner, considering cultural and contextual factors.

I understand that different cultures and contexts may interpret emojis differently, so I try to choose emojis that are universally understood and respectful. I also pay attention to my teachers' preferences and adapt my emoji usage accordingly. Therefore, as an EFL learner, emojis serve as

a valuable tool for managing rapport with my teachers. They allow me to express my emotions, seek clarification, and show my enthusiasm in a text-based environment. By using emojis effectively and respectfully, I can enhance communication and foster a positive relationship with my teachers.

The student discusses the approach to using emojis in a text-based environment. They acknowledge that different cultures and contexts may interpret emojis differently, so they make an effort to choose emojis that are universally understood and respectful. They also mention that they pay attention to their teachers' preferences and adapt their emoji usage accordingly. The interviewee highlights the value of emojis as a tool for managing rapport with their teachers. They explain that emojis allow them to express their emotions, seek clarification, and show enthusiasm in a text-based environment. By using emojis effectively and respectfully, they believe they can enhance communication and foster a positive relationship with their teachers. Therefore, the interviewee demonstrates a thoughtful and considerate approach to using emojis in their interactions with teachers. They recognize the importance of cultural and contextual differences and adapt their emoji usage accordingly. Their understanding of the potential benefits of emojis in communication shows their commitment to effective and respectful communication as a student.

Addressing the Third Research Question

The third research question of the present study was: How does the teacher use emojis to create relationships with their students? The

researcher also used interviews to gather the data. The goal of the interview was to understand the teachers' perspectives and attitudes toward the use of emojis to create relationships with their students. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, all of the interviews were analyzed. The analysis of data gathered from interviews produced major responses related to the objectives of the study.

I use emojis to show my emotions and encourage my students when they do well or need help. I use emojis to make my messages more engaging and fun for my students. I use emojis to enhance my communication and clarify my meaning when words are not enough. I use emojis to create activities and prompts for my students to practice their language skills. For example, I use a series of emojis to tell a story and ask them to write or retell it in their own words, or I use emojis to summarize their weekend and ask them to guess what I did.

In this excerpt of the interview, the participant explains their use of emojis in various ways to interact with their students. The participant mentions using emojis to show emotions and provide encouragement to students when they perform well or require assistance. This suggests that the participant believes emojis can effectively convey positive reinforcement and support. Additionally, the participant states that they use emojis to make their messages more engaging and enjoyable for their students. This implies that the participant believes emojis can enhance the overall experience of communication, making it more interactive and fun. Furthermore, the participant mentions

using emojis to clarify their meaning when words alone may not be sufficient. This suggests that the participant sees emojis as a tool to supplement verbal or written communication, helping to convey emotions or intentions that may be difficult to express solely through text. Lastly, the participant describes using emojis to create activities and prompts for their students to practice their language skills. This indicates that the participant believes emojis can be utilized as a creative and interactive way to engage students in language learning exercises. For instance, the participant mentions using a series of emojis to tell a story and asking students to write or retell it in their own words. They also mention using emojis to summarize their weekend and asking students to guess their activities. These activities likely aim to foster language comprehension, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

I utilize emojis as a means to create relationships with my students in various ways. Emojis provide a visual and expressive element to my online communication, allowing me to convey emotions, establish rapport, and create a positive learning environment. One way I use emojis is to show appreciation and encouragement to my students. When they participate actively, submit high-quality work, or achieve milestones, I often respond with emojis like a thumbs-up, clapping hands, or a smiley face. This helps to acknowledge their efforts, boost their confidence, and foster a sense of support and recognition.

The teacher discusses their use of emojis as a tool to build relationships with their students in an online setting. They highlight several

benefits of utilizing emojis in their communication. Firstly, the interviewee mentions that emojis provide a visual and expressive element to their online communication. This suggests that emojis help to convey emotions more effectively than plain text, allowing for a richer and more nuanced form of expression. By using emojis, the interviewee can better communicate their feelings and intentions to their students. Secondly, the interviewee states that emojis help them establish rapport with their students. Using emojis can create a more informal and friendly atmosphere, which can contribute to a positive learning environment. Emojis can help to bridge the gap between the online teacher and students, making the communication more relatable and engaging.

Emojis also help me to convey warmth and friendliness in my interactions with students. For example, at the beginning of a new school year or during special occasions, I might use emojis like a party hat or confetti to create a celebratory atmosphere. This helps to create a positive and welcoming environment where ... students feel comfortable and valued. Furthermore, emojis can be used to provide feedback and guidance in a more engaging and approachable manner. Instead of using plain text, I might incorporate emojis like a lightbulb or a thinking face to indicate areas for improvement or to prompt critical thinking. This helps to make the feedback process more interactive and ... encourages students to reflect on their learning.

In this excerpt, the participant discusses how emojis are used to enhance their interactions

with students. They mention that emojis help convey warmth and friendliness, particularly during special occasions or at the beginning of a new school year. By using emojis like a party hat or confetti, the participant creates a celebratory atmosphere, fostering a positive and welcoming environment for students. The participant also highlights how emojis can be utilized to provide feedback and guidance in a more engaging and approachable manner. Instead of using plain text, they incorporate emojis like a lightbulb or a thinking face to indicate areas for improvement or to prompt critical thinking. This approach makes the feedback process more interactive and encourages students to reflect on their learning. Therefore, the participant believes that emojis play a valuable role in creating a positive classroom environment, promoting student comfort and value, and facilitating interactive feedback and reflection.

However, it's important for me as a teacher to use emojis judiciously and consider the appropriateness of each situation. I am mindful of cultural differences and ensure that the emojis I use are universally understood and respectful. I also encourage open communication with my students, allowing them to express their preferences and comfort levels ... with emoji usage. Therefore, I utilize emojis as a tool to create relationships with my students. They allow me to express appreciation, convey warmth, provide feedback, and foster a positive learning environment. By using emojis effectively and thoughtfully, I can enhance communication, build rapport, and establish a supportive relationship with my students.

Based on this excerpt, the teacher states their approach to using emojis in their role as an educator. They emphasize the importance of using emojis judiciously and considering the appropriateness of each situation. The teacher is mindful of cultural differences and ensures that the emojis they use are universally understood and respectful. Furthermore, the teacher encourages open communication with their students, allowing them to express their preferences and comfort levels with emoji usage. By doing so, the teacher utilizes emojis as a tool to create relationships with their students. They believe that emojis can be used to express appreciation, convey warmth, provide feedback, and foster a positive learning environment. The teacher recognizes the potential of emojis to enhance communication, build rapport, and establish a supportive relationship with their students. Thus, they approach emoji usage thoughtfully and effectively, aiming to create a positive and inclusive learning environment.

I find that emojis can be a valuable tool for creating relationships with my students. Emojis provide a visual and expressive element to our online communication, allowing me to connect with my students on a more personal and engaging level. One way I use emojis is to create a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere. For example, at the beginning of a lesson or during discussions, I might use emojis like a smiley face or a thumbs-up to greet my students or show encouragement. This helps to establish a friendly and welcoming environment where students feel comfortable and motivated to participate.

The participant claims that the use of emojis is a valuable tool for building relationships with students. They highlight that emojis add a visual and expressive element to online communication, enabling them to connect with students on a more personal and engaging level. The participant explains that they use emojis to create a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere. For instance, they might use emojis like a smiley face or a thumbs-up to greet students or show encouragement at the beginning of a lesson or during discussions. This approach aims to establish a friendly and welcoming environment where students feel comfortable and motivated to participate. In conclusion, the participant believes that emojis enhance their ability to connect with students and foster a positive classroom atmosphere, ultimately contributing to better student engagement and participation.

Emojis help me to provide feedback and reinforcement to my students. Instead of using plain text, I might incorporate emojis like a star or a trophy to acknowledge their achievements or highlight areas of improvement. This visual representation of feedback adds a sense of positivity and helps students to understand and internalize the feedback more effectively.

According to this excerpt, the interviewee discusses how they utilize emojis to provide feedback and reinforcement to their students. They explain that instead of using plain text, they incorporate emojis such as a star or a trophy to acknowledge their students' achievements or highlight areas of improvement. The interviewee believes that using emojis as a visual representation of

feedback adds a sense of positivity and helps students understand and internalize the feedback more effectively. By incorporating emojis, the interviewee aims to create a more engaging and interactive feedback experience for their students. Emojis are commonly used in digital communication to convey emotions and reactions, and in this context, they serve as a form of non-verbal communication to express encouragement or constructive criticism. The interviewee's approach suggests that the use of emojis can enhance the feedback process by making it more visually appealing and relatable to students. The visual representation of feedback through emojis may help students better grasp the intended message and create a positive association with their achievements or areas for improvement.

I think, emojis can be used to facilitate understanding and clarify instructions. For example, if I want to emphasize a specific point or concept, I might use emojis like a magnifying glass or a lightbulb to draw attention and indicate importance. This visual cue helps students to grasp key information and enhances their comprehension. Additionally, emojis can be used to express empathy and understanding. If a student shares a challenge or expresses frustration, I might use emojis like a hug or a supportive hand to show empathy and offer encouragement. This helps to create a supportive and caring environment where students feel valued and understood.

In this excerpt of the interview, the participant explains the potential benefits of using emojis in facilitating understanding and clarifying instructions. They suggest that emojis

can be used to emphasize specific points or concepts, using symbols like a magnifying glass or a lightbulb to draw attention and indicate importance. This visual cue is believed to help students grasp key information and enhance their comprehension. Furthermore, the participant mentions that emojis can also be used to express empathy and understanding. If a student shares a challenge or expresses frustration, the participant suggests using emojis like a hug or a supportive hand to show empathy and offer encouragement. This approach aims to create a supportive and caring environment where students feel valued and understood. So, the participant sees emojis as a tool that can enhance communication in educational settings by providing visual cues and expressing emotions.

I ensure that the emojis I use are universally understood and respectful. I also encourage open communication with my students, allowing them to express their preferences and comfort levels with emoji usage. Thus, I utilize emojis to create relationships with my students by fostering a positive classroom atmosphere, providing feedback and reinforcement, facilitating understanding, and expressing empathy. By incorporating emojis thoughtfully and effectively, I can enhance communication, build rapport, and create a supportive learning environment for my students.

In this excerpt, the interviewee discusses their approach to using emojis in their teaching practice. They emphasize the importance of using universally understood and respectful emojis, indicating a consideration for cultural and social contexts. By doing so, they aim to

create a positive classroom atmosphere and build relationships with their students. The interviewee also highlights the value of open communication with students regarding emoji usage and their preferences and comfort levels. This approach demonstrates a willingness to adapt and accommodate individual needs, fostering a sense of inclusivity and respect. The interviewee identifies several benefits of incorporating emojis in their teaching. Firstly, they mention using emojis for providing feedback and reinforcement, which can help students understand and internalize the information more effectively. Emojis can serve as visual cues that enhance communication and make the feedback more engaging. Additionally, the interviewee suggests that emojis can facilitate understanding by adding emotional context to messages. Emojis can convey empathy, humor, or other emotions that may be difficult to express through text alone. This can help students interpret the intended tone and meaning of the message more accurately. In conclusion, the interviewee believes that by thoughtfully and effectively incorporating emojis into their teaching practice, they can enhance communication, build rapport with students, and create a supportive learning environment.

Addressing the Fourth Research Question

The fourth research question of the present study was: Are emojis a "universal visual language" or "socially-appropriately used" in the Iranian culture? The aim of the research question is to investigate whether emojis can be considered a universal visual language that transcends cultural boundaries or if specific cultural norms and practices influence their usage. The research aims to explore the extent

to which emojis are understood and interpreted similarly across different cultures, as well as how cultural factors may shape their usage and meaning within specific cultural contexts.

In my opinion, emojis can be seen as a combination of both a "universal visual language" and a culturally influenced form of communication. On one hand, emojis are designed to convey emotions, expressions, and ideas in a visual and universally understandable way. The basic meanings of emojis, such as a smiling face or a heart, can generally be understood across different cultures and languages. This universality allows emojis to serve as a form of communication that transcends language barriers and facilitates understanding in online interactions.

According to participant's response, emojis have two main aspects: their role as a "universal visual language" and their cultural influence on communication. Firstly, emojis are described as a "universal visual language" because they are designed to convey emotions, expressions, and ideas visually and universally understandable. Emojis use simple and recognizable symbols to represent various concepts, such as a smiling face or a heart. These basic meanings can generally be understood across different cultures and languages, allowing for easy communication and comprehension. Secondly, the excerpt acknowledges that emojis are also culturally influenced forms of communication. While the basic meanings of emojis are generally understood, their interpretation and usage can vary across different cultures and contexts. For example, certain emojis may have different

connotations or be used in specific ways depending on cultural norms or individual preferences. This cultural influence adds depth and nuance to the use of emojis, making them more than just a universal visual language.

I think, the interpretation and usage of emojis can also be influenced by cultural and social norms. Different cultures may have specific interpretations or associations with certain emojis that may not be universally shared. For example, a thumbs-up emoji may be seen as a positive gesture in many cultures, but in some Middle Eastern countries, it can be considered offensive. Additionally, the frequency and appropriateness of emoji usage can vary across cultures and social contexts. Some cultures may embrace and use emojis more frequently, while others may have different norms and preferences for communication.

The participant explains how the interpretation and usage of emojis can be influenced by cultural and social norms. The interviewer highlights that different cultures may have specific interpretations or associations with certain emojis that are not universally shared. For instance, a thumbs-up emoji is generally seen as a positive gesture in many cultures, but it can be considered offensive in some Middle Eastern countries. This example demonstrates how the meaning of an emoji can vary depending on cultural context. Furthermore, the excerpt mentions that the frequency and appropriateness of emoji usage can also differ across cultures and social contexts. Some cultures may embrace and use emojis more frequently, while others may have different norms and preferences for communication.

This suggests that individuals from different cultural backgrounds may have varying comfort levels and expectations when it comes to using emojis in their communication.

In my opinion, while emojis can be considered a "universal visual language" to some extent, their usage and interpretation can also be socially and culturally influenced. It is important to be mindful of these cultural nuances and adapt our emoji usage accordingly, especially in cross-cultural or international communication.

The excerpt highlights the opinion that emojis can be seen as a "universal visual language" to a certain degree. However, it also acknowledges that their usage and interpretation can be influenced by social and cultural factors. The interviewee emphasizes the importance of being aware of these cultural nuances and adjusting emoji usage accordingly, particularly in cross-cultural or international communication. This perspective recognizes that while emojis can convey emotions and ideas in a visual manner, their meaning may not always be universally understood. Different cultures may have varying interpretations or associations with certain emojis. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the cultural context when using emojis to ensure effective communication and avoid misunderstandings. By acknowledging the social and cultural influences on emoji usage, the interviewee promotes a more nuanced and adaptable approach to communication. This mindset encourages individuals to be mindful of the potential cultural differences in interpretation and adapt their emoji usage accordingly, fostering better cross-cultural understanding and communication.

In my opinion, emojis have some features that make them suitable for universal communication, but they also have some limitations and variations that require social and cultural awareness. On the one hand, emojis have some advantages as a universal visual language. Emojis are used by millions of people around the world, across different platforms and devices. Emojis are based on common objects, actions, and emotions that are recognizable and relatable to most people. Emojis can enhance the meaning and tone of text messages and emails by adding non-verbal cues such as humor, irony, or sarcasm. Emojis can also facilitate cross-cultural communication by bridging language barriers and reducing misunderstandings.

The participant highlights both the advantages and limitations of emojis in universal communication. On the positive side, emojis serve as a universal visual language due to their widespread usage across various platforms and devices by millions of people worldwide. They are based on common objects, actions, and emotions that are easily recognizable and relatable to most individuals. By incorporating emojis into text messages and emails, they can enhance the meaning and tone of the communication by adding non-verbal cues like humor, irony, or sarcasm. Additionally, emojis can aid in cross-cultural communication by bridging language barriers and reducing misunderstandings. However, it is also mentioned that emojis have limitations and variations that necessitate social and cultural awareness. This implies that while emojis can be effective in conveying certain emotions or concepts, their interpretation may vary

depending on the cultural background or social context of the individuals involved. Therefore, it is important to exercise caution and consider the potential cultural differences when using emojis in communication.

I believe that emojis can have different meanings and connotations in different cultures, such as the thumbs-up emoji that can signify approval in Western cultures but insult in some Middle Eastern cultures. Emojis can also vary in appearance and design across different platforms and devices, such as the grinning face emoji that can look happy on some devices but grimacing on others.

The participant explains the cultural and visual variations of emojis. The first point made is that emojis can have different meanings and connotations in different cultures. For example, the thumbs-up emoji is generally seen as a sign of approval in Western cultures, but it can be interpreted as an insult in some Middle Eastern cultures. This highlights the importance of considering cultural context when using emojis. The second point raised is that emojis can vary in appearance and design across different platforms and devices. For instance, the grinning face emoji may appear happy on some devices, but it can look more like a grimace on others. This variation in visual representation can lead to misinterpretations or misunderstandings when communicating through emojis. Thus, this excerpt emphasizes the need for awareness and sensitivity when using emojis, taking into account both cultural differences and the potential for visual discrepancies across platforms.

Emojis can also be ambiguous and vague in their meaning, such as the slightly smiling emoji that can imply happiness in some situations but distrust or disbelief in others. On the other hand, emojis have some challenges as a universal visual language. Emojis are not always interpreted the same way by different people, depending on their language, culture, and context.

The participant states the ambiguity and vagueness of emojis in conveying meaning. Specifically, they mention the slightly smiling emoji, which can be interpreted as indicating happiness in certain situations but distrust or disbelief in others. This highlights the subjective nature of emoji interpretation. Furthermore, the interviewer points out that emojis face challenges as a universal visual language. Different people may interpret emojis differently based on factors such as their language, culture, and context. This suggests that the meaning of emojis can vary across individuals and communities, making it difficult to establish a consistent understanding. So, the excerpt highlights the complexities and limitations of using emojis as a form of communication, emphasizing the need for caution and awareness of potential misinterpretations.

I think emojis are both a universal visual language and a socially-appropriate use in a particular culture. Emojis have the potential to enrich and expand our communication in the digital age, but they also require us to be mindful and respectful of the diversity and complexity of our audiences. Emojis are not a substitute for words, but rather a complement to them. As an interviewee, I

would demonstrate my awareness and sensitivity to the use of emojis in different contexts and cultures, and I would use them sparingly and appropriately to convey my message.

The participant expresses their perspective on emojis. They believe that emojis serve as a universal visual language and can be used appropriately within specific cultures. The interviewee acknowledges that emojis have the potential to enhance communication in the digital age but emphasizes the importance of being mindful and respectful of the diverse audiences that may interpret them differently. The interviewee also highlights that emojis should not be seen as a replacement for words but rather as a complement to them. They demonstrate their awareness and sensitivity to the use of emojis in various contexts and cultures. The interviewee intends to use emojis sparingly and appropriately to effectively convey their message. In conclusion, the interviewee's viewpoint reflects a balanced understanding of emojis as a tool for communication, recognizing both their potential benefits and the need for cultural sensitivity.

Discussion

Emojis have become an integral part of our digital communication, and it's fascinating to consider their impact on language learning and rapport building between L2 students and their teachers. I believe that emojis can play a significant role in enhancing communication and fostering a positive relationship. It is thought that they can add emotional context and help bridge the gap between different languages and cultures.

The findings revealed that emojis can be particularly useful in L2 classrooms where students may struggle with expressing their emotions or understanding the nuances of a new language. It is believed that emojis provide a visual representation of emotions, making it easier for students to convey their feelings and for teachers to gauge their understanding. A more relaxed and friendly atmosphere can be created, which is considered crucial for effective learning. While the potential benefits of using emojis are understood, it is also important to consider the cultural and contextual aspects. Different cultures may interpret emojis differently, and what might be perceived as positive or neutral in one culture could be seen as negative or inappropriate in another. It is important for teachers to be mindful of these cultural differences and ensure that their use of emojis is appropriate and respectful.

The findings of present study are in line with those of Tragant et al. (2022) who explored the use of instant messaging through WhatsApp by a group of EFL learners ($n = 23$) who were regularly sent optional language-learning tasks by their teacher during an intensive summer course. By the end of a five-week-period, 764 messages had been produced, which are explored through a qualitative analysis in the present study, with particular attention to changes of participation as a result of time. Most of the messages in the WhatsApp group were produced by the students in the context of the teacher-initiated tasks and through them students had the chance to practice the language as well as engage in real communication, even though student participation tended to decrease over time. The WhatsApp group was also used for informal communication among the

students and with the teacher (a total of 289 off-task messages) which, in contrast to on-task messages, grew over time. The nature of the interactions also tended to be more spontaneous and symmetrical, at times with more of a presence of textese. Negotiation of form and content was scarce, but both on-task and off-task messages turned out to be equally productive in engaging students to use English beyond the walls of the classroom.

Additionally, the findings of present study support those of Alshammari et al. (2017) investigated the use of WhatsApp, one popular messaging application, in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) through examining the attitudes of Preparatory Year students and faculty members at a university in the central-north of Saudi Arabia. Thematic analysis of focus group interviews indicated that WhatsApp is used in EFL instruction for information exchange, language learning support, and language practice. This is achieved through teacher-directed learning, peer learning, and autonomous learning instructional strategies. Thematic analysis also identified the affordances and affective outcomes of using WhatsApp. Student and faculty attitudes towards WhatsApp were positive although some faculty members expressed reservations towards its use. It is argued that applications such as WhatsApp should be leveraged to encourage autonomous and peer learning, repositioning instructors as facilitators, and to develop learning communities. However, increasing the informal, anywhere-anytime learning supported by mobile learning must be tempered with guidelines for students regarding faculty contact hours and response times to allay faculty fears and encourage greater student autonomy.

Moreover, the findings of present study are in accordance with those of Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) found that online teaching in English classes develops students' academic performance in general. The findings indicated that those students who studied under the new model of teaching and learning via technological tools outperformed those who studied under the traditional teaching method. Similarly, Aşıksoy (2018) investigated the ELT students' attitudes towards the use of technological tools to improve their language skills and to identify the technological tools used by the students. The data of the study were obtained by using the "Attitude questionnaire for technological tools". The study found that students were aware of the existence of technological tools used in Learning English and that they had a positive attitude towards the use of the tools. The findings have shown that the vast majority were aware of the technological tools in language learning and that they believe these tools help them in learning English. Students have stated that technological tools developed their English listening skills the most.

Additionally, the results of present study are in line with those of Seraji, Ziabari, and Rokni (2017) aimed to seek out new information in an effort to investigate teachers' attitude toward technology. The purpose of the study was to investigate the attitude towards technology among teachers working in several institutes in Mazandaran. A total of 100 teachers including 38 males and 62 females, ranging in age from 22 to 50 and 20 to 42 respectively completed a survey. The result of the research questions showed that: (1) there was a statistically significant relationship between teacher experience and attitude toward technology, (2)

there was a statistically significant relationship between teacher tenure and attitude towards technology, and (3) there was a statistically significant relationship between teacher age and attitude toward technology.

Previous studies have explored the use of technology in language learning and the role of digital communication platforms in fostering rapport between teachers and students. These studies have examined various aspects such as the use of social media, online forums, and video conferencing tools. The topic of using emojis in WhatsApp messaging specifically to manage rapport is a relatively new area of research. Similar to previous studies, the current topic recognizes the importance of rapport in language learning and the potential of technology to enhance communication and relationship building. Both areas of research aim to create a positive and supportive learning environment for L2 students. However, the focus on emojis in WhatsApp messaging distinguishes this topic from previous studies. Emojis have gained significant popularity and have become an integral part of digital communication. This topic specifically explores how emojis can be used as a tool to manage rapport between L2 students and their teachers. While previous studies have examined the use of technology in language learning, they may not have specifically focused on the role of emojis or the use of WhatsApp messaging. This topic provides a more specific and targeted investigation into the potential benefits and challenges of using emojis in WhatsApp messaging for rapport management.

Furthermore, the topic also highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity and the potential cultural variations in emoji

interpretation and usage. This aspect sets it apart from previous studies that may not have explicitly addressed the cultural considerations associated with emoji usage in language learning contexts. Consequently, while there are similarities between this topic and previous studies in terms of recognizing the importance of rapport and technology in language learning, the specific focus on emojis in WhatsApp messaging and the consideration of cultural differences make this topic unique and contribute to the existing body of research in the field.

Moreover, cultural sensitivity is considered crucial when using emojis in a multicultural classroom. The potential misinterpretations and misunderstandings that can arise should be taken into account. Clear guidelines should be established, and students should be educated about the cultural variations in emoji usage to avoid any unintended offense or confusion. Emojis should not be overly relied upon as a substitute for verbal communication. While they can enhance understanding and rapport, they should not replace face-to-face interactions or more in-depth discussions. Striking a balance and using emojis as a supplementary tool rather than the sole means of communication is important. Emojis should be seen as a tool to support language learning and rapport building, not as a replacement for traditional teaching methods. Students should be encouraged to develop their language skills and express themselves using words while using emojis as a complementary element to enrich their communication.

Consequently, it is believed that the use of emojis in WhatsApp messaging can be a valuable tool for L2 students and teachers to

establish rapport and enhance communication. However, it is crucial to be mindful of cultural differences, use emojis appropriately, and strike a balance between verbal and emoji-based communication. With proper guidance and awareness, the potential of emojis to create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment for L2 students can be harnessed. Approaching the use of emojis in WhatsApp messaging with sensitivity and awareness is important. By doing so, the potential of emojis to create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment for L2 students can be maximized.

Conclusion

The topic of L2 students' rapport management with their teacher using emojis in WhatsApp messaging has been discussed. It was observed that emojis can play a significant role in enhancing communication and fostering a positive relationship between L2 students and their teachers. The use of emojis can provide a visual representation of emotions, making it easier for students to express themselves and for teachers to gauge their understanding. However, it is important to be mindful of cultural differences and use emojis appropriately to avoid any unintended offense or confusion. Emojis should be seen as a supplementary tool to support language learning and rapport building, rather than a replacement for traditional teaching methods. By striking a balance between verbal and emoji-based communication and providing proper guidance and awareness, the potential of emojis to create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment for L2 students can be maximized.

The results highlight the benefits of using emojis as a visual representation of emotions in

communication between students and teachers. Emojis serve as a valuable tool for students to express themselves more effectively, especially in language learning contexts where they may struggle with language proficiency. Additionally, emojis enable teachers to gauge students' understanding and emotional state, facilitating more targeted and personalized instruction. By incorporating emojis into communication, both students and teachers can enhance their understanding and create a more engaging and supportive learning environment.

Consequently, the topic of L2 students' rapport management with their teacher using emojis in WhatsApp messaging highlights the potential of emojis to enhance communication and foster positive relationships in language learning contexts. The discussion has revealed that emojis can play a significant role in expressing emotions, bridging language and cultural barriers, and creating a friendly and inclusive learning environment. By using emojis thoughtfully and considering cultural differences, teachers can effectively utilize this tool to strengthen rapport with their L2 students. Therefore, the findings emphasize the importance of leveraging technology and digital communication platforms to enhance language learning experiences and promote positive teacher-student relationships.

Pedagogical Implication of the Study

The study on L2 students' rapport management with their teacher using emojis in WhatsApp messaging has several pedagogical implications. Firstly, it is suggested that teachers should consider incorporating emojis as a supplementary tool in their language teaching practices. Emojis can help students express their

emotions and understand the nuances of a new language more effectively. Secondly, teachers need to be aware of the cultural differences in emoji usage and provide guidance to students. This includes educating students about the variations in interpretation across different cultures to avoid any unintended misunderstandings or offense.

Furthermore, teachers should encourage a balanced approach to communication, ensuring that emojis do not replace face-to-face interactions or more in-depth discussions. Emojis should be used as a complementary element to enrich verbal communication, rather than as a sole means of expression. Additionally, teachers should establish clear guidelines for the appropriate use of emojis in WhatsApp messaging. This includes setting expectations for respectful and inclusive communication, while also promoting a positive and friendly classroom atmosphere. Lastly, ongoing research and professional development opportunities should be encouraged for teachers to stay updated on the latest trends and best practices regarding the use of emojis in language teaching. This will enable them to effectively integrate emojis into their pedagogical strategies and maximize their potential for enhancing rapport and communication with L2 students. Therefore, the pedagogical implications of this study highlight the importance of incorporating emojis thoughtfully and purposefully in language teaching, considering cultural differences, and promoting a balanced and inclusive approach to communication.

Suggestion for further Research

The impact of different cultural backgrounds on the interpretation and use of emojis in L2

classrooms should be investigated. This research could explore how emojis are perceived and utilized by students from diverse cultural backgrounds in WhatsApp messaging, and how these perceptions influence rapport management. The long-term effects of using emojis in rapport management need to be examined. A longitudinal study could be conducted to track the development of rapport between L2 students and their teachers over an extended period, considering the role of emojis in maintaining and enhancing rapport over time. Additionally, the potential benefits and challenges of using emojis in different educational contexts should be explored. Research could compare the use of emojis in WhatsApp messaging with other digital communication platforms or face-to-face interactions, examining how the choice of platform affects rapport management and language learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the role of teacher training and professional development in effectively utilizing emojis for rapport management needs to be investigated. This research could explore how teachers can be trained to integrate emojis into their pedagogical practices, considering the impact on rapport, student engagement, and language learning outcomes. The perceptions and experiences of L2 students regarding the use of emojis in rapport management should be examined. This research could involve qualitative interviews or surveys to gather insights into how L2 students perceive the use of emojis, their preferences, and the impact on their language learning experience. Moreover, the potential gender differences in the use and interpretation of emojis in rapport management should be investigated. This research could

explore whether there is any gender-specific patterns in the use of emojis and how these patterns influence rapport between L2 students and their teachers.

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