

# LAUGHTER INTERJECTION IN INDONESIAN ON WHATSAPP SOCIAL MEDIA

Dewi Nurmala<sup>1\*</sup>, Tengku Silvana Sinar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al Washliyah

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Sumatera Utara

<sup>1</sup> dewinurmala@umnaw.ac.id, <sup>2</sup> tengkusilvana@usu.ac.id

## Abstract

The objective of the research is to seek the laughter interjection on WhatsApp social media. The data is taken from the conversations on WhatsApp social media. The data are analyzed using Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) theory. The method used is a qualitative method. From the results of the study, it was found that there were several laughter interjections found in WhatsApp social media, namely laughter interjections hahaha, hehehe, wkwkwk, and hiks hiks hiks. The interjection of laughing hahaha indicates a sense of reluctance or discomfort and there is also a sense of humor felt by the speaker. While the laughter interjection hehehe shows the shame towards someone or feels bad because the speaker feels disturbing to others or feels reluctant to treat the interlocutor in the conversation. Then there is the laughter interjection wkwkwk which shows something that is considered very funny so that the speaker or interlocutor feels amused by the stated expression. Finally, there is an interjection of laughing hiks hiks hiks, which is a person's embarrassment about a statement of someone has said.

**Keywords:** Laughter Interjection, WhatsApp, Natural Semantic Metalanguage

## INTRODUCTION

Interjection is an expression that shows someone's emotions which are indicated by words. Li (2005:65) in Hişmanoğlu (2010) states that the term "interjection" arises from the Latin inter meaning "between" and jacer meaning "throw". They are words or constructions with no real linguistic value but we generally employ them to express feelings or states of mind in daily life situations. We use interjections more in speaking than in writing. Examples in English include *wow, ouch, oops, er, huh, gee, ooh, uh, aha, brrr, shh, ahem, psst*. Wierzbicka (1991: 290) states that an interjection is a linguistic sign in the form of words used to express a meaning that can be determined and refers to the state of the heart and mind of the speaker and the interjection does not have the same sound with the category other words (see Ameka, 2006:2). Wierzbicka divides interjection into three, namely emotional interjection, volitive interjection, and cognitive interjection. Emotional interjection relates to a person's good or bad emotions or feelings towards something; for example, *Wow!* And *Ouch!*. Interjection police relate to wanting or wanting to get the attention of the speaker; for example, *Hey!* and *Shh!*. In contrast, interjection cognition relates to thought processes and curiosity; for example, *Aha! Mhm* and *Uh-huh*. However, words such as Good Lord and Good Heavens are not included in the interjection because the words Good Lord and Good Heavens have the same word, namely Good. These words are categorized as exclamations by Wierzbicka. In Indonesian, there are some interjection such as 'uh, wah, ah' to express the wonder, 'cis, ih' to show the disgust interjection, and the others.

The research of interjection usually appears in a reading book or comic. Dewi & Djarwo (2019) states that one of speech that can add excitement in a reading book is interjection. This kind of

feeling is also found in social media. In social media, interjection has often been used to express the feelings or emotives of social users in the form of sound symbolism. Laughter interjection is a type of bodily sound symbolism that expresses the feelings of the speaker. The social media used in viewing the research data is Whatsapp social media. According to data on the DataIndonesia.id website, the number of active social media users in Indonesia will reach 191 million people in 2022 with 88.7% of WhatsApp users and 84.4% of Instagram and Facebook. From the data above, it can be concluded that the social media that are often used by users in Indonesia are WhatsApp and Instagram. As explained by Wierzbicka previously that interjection is divided into three emotional interjections, volitive interjection, and cognitive interjection and laughter interjection is included in the category of emotive interjection because it shows a person's emotions that are happy when laughing. Laughter interjection does not only appear in writings such as comics or story books. Laughter interjections also often appear on social media such as Whatsapp. In the analysis of laughter interjection, Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) theory was used. Goddard (1998: 58) states that NSM is related to the semiotic principle which states that the analysis of meaning will be discrete (fixed) and complete, meaning that any complex meaning can be explained without the need to go round and round and without residue in other discrete combinations of meaning (see Mulyadi and Siregar, 2006: 69).

All languages have special interjections to express feeling linked with specific words. The utterance of interjections in everyday conversation have been investigated for years (Simanihuruk & Mulyadi, 2020: 211). In many researches, some linguists have analysed the interjection of different languages. Mao (2020) in his research discussed about A Comparative Study of Interjections in Chinese and English. In his research, it was found that the level of morphological structures, semantic relations and syntactic functions to be more comprehensive understanding of interjections. Research on laughter interjection has been carried out by Levisen (2019) with the title *Laughter Interjections; Contribution to Lexical Anthropology of Humor (With Special Reference to Danish)*. In this research, the researcher uses the Natural Semantic theory or better known as the NSM theory. From the results of his research on several laughing interjections in Danish such as *høhø* or *tøhø* where the interjection *høhø* is a laugh that shows a sound like someone who is evil but attentive showing ordinary humor, while *tøhø* is a laughing interjection that shows something not so bad.

Then the research of interjection on social media has been conducted by Yatno et al (2018) titled *Manner and Meaning of Interjection on Medsos Community in Facebook (the Study of Ethnolinguistic)*. The result of the study is that there are three forms of interjection on the FB status. Each has some emotive, cognitive, volitive, and also in the form of words and phrases. Situations and conditions at the same time of interjection are expressed giving emotional signals and determine how comments interpret the interjection with the form of words and phrases, and also express interjections that trigger emotional responses to other comments on what one or other users say on the FB wall. In social media such as WhatsApp, laughter interjections such as *hahaha*, *hihihi*, *hehehe*, *kwkwkw*, *wkwkwk* also express the emotion of someone. One example of the interjection used in WhatsApp social media in conversations between friends is the interjection *hehehe* where when A asks the administration to B if you want to take leave, do you have to send a letter to the leadership then B responds with the answer you don't know and asks if A will go to a certain place. Then B writes the interjection '*hehehe*,' by adding the statement 'where I am going'. From this example, the laughing context that the friend responded to suggests that the laughter interjection *hehehe* shows that she is smiling but seems to be blushing after being asked where she is going. Based on the phenomena that have been

described previously, this research will focus on the meaning of laughter interjection which is used by whatsapp social media using NSM theory.

## METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative method with library sources. The data used in this study are interjection words that appear on WhatsApp social media such as *hahaha*, *hehehe*, *wkwkwk*, and others. Data collection and data analysis in the study were carried out in three stages, namely: (1) data condensation, (2) data presentation, and (3) drawing conclusions (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014: 8). In the data condensation stage, data in the form of laughing interjections were collected. At the data presentation stage, the data that has been collected is then selected to find data that actually includes laughing interjections. After finding the data in question, then the data is analyzed and conclusions are drawn.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The results of this study found that there were several laughter interjections found in WhatsApp social media, namely laughter interjections *hahaha*, *hehehe*, *wkwkwk*, and *hiks hiks hiks*. The interjection of laughing *hahaha* indicates a sense of reluctance or discomfort and there is also a sense of humor felt by the speaker. While the laughter interjection *hehehe* shows shame towards someone or feels bad because the speaker feels disturbing to others or feels reluctant to treat the interlocutor in the conversation. Then there is the laughing interjection *wkwkwk* which shows something that is considered very funny so that the speaker or interlocutor feels amused by the stated expression. Finally, there is an interjection of laughing *hiks hiks hiks*, someone's embarrassment about a statement he has said.

### Discussion

In NSM theory, the meaning of a word can be paraphrased using meaning components such as the sentence I feel something or I know something. Wierzbicka (2003: 289) in Shannon (2018: 3) gives an example of the interjection of admiration in English Wow! 'I am surprised' has the following explanation

‘Wow!’

- a. I know something
- b. I wouldn't have thought I would know it
- c. I think it is very good
- d. I wouldn't have thought it could be like that
- e. I feel something because of that

Laughter interjection is a form of emotional interjection related to the expression of human feelings which is shown through laughing symbols. In WhatsApp social media there are several laughing interjections as follows:

1. Laughter Interjection *hahaha*



From the data above, it can be seen that in the first whatsapp conversation there was an interjection of laughter *hahahaaa* with a situation where a friend asked if a friend could help with journal payments via credit card and in the conversation he answered yes but he asked how much the price was and doubted the limit was not enough then added with laughing interjection *hahahaaa*. Then in the second chat containing a conversation with a friend who asked another friend if he had a swab test and his friend replied that he was still at home and was called by the swab test committee, then in the next chat there was a chat with laughing interjections *hahahaha* by adding the statement ‘it is a compulsory command, sister’. From the description of the conversation on WhatsApp, it can be seen that the laughter interjection *hahaha* used in the first conversation shows an expression of reluctance for fear of not being able to help a friend who asks for help. While in the second conversation the interjection laughed *hahahaaa* showing a funny expression because the first speaker thought that his friend had arrived at the swab place but was in fact still at home. The following is an explication of the semantic component of laughing interjection *hahaha*. The semantic explanation of laughter interjection for *hahaha* as follows:

**The semantic explication for *hahaha***

When I said something before,

I said it because I wanted people here to laugh [m]

Some people here can think that there is not much to laugh [m] about

I think about this word like;

When people want to say something reticent or funny they can say it with this word.

2. Laughter Interjection *hehehe*



From the data above, it can be seen that in the first whatsapp conversation there was a laughter interjection *hehehe* with a situation where a lecturer asked a student to come to the office and the student asked for permission to bring a friend and the friend would wait outside, but the lecturer said to her to ask her friend just walked in, then the student answered with the interjection '*hehehe* it's okay mam'. In the second WhatsApp conversation, the situation is that a friend asks the number of journal pages that have been made but it turns out that the page is considered mostly by the interlocutor and the statement is responded to with a laughter interjection of '*hehehe*, it is less mostly'. In both of these situations, it can be concluded that the laughter interjection *hehehe* shows an expression of shame or feeling uncomfortable because the speaker feels that he is disturbing other people or feels reluctant about the treatment of the interlocutor in the conversation. The semantic explanation of laughter interjection *hehehe* as follows:

**The semantic explication for *hehehe***

- When I said something before,
- I said it because I wanted people here to laugh [m]
- Some people here can think that there is not much to laugh [m] about
- I think about this word like;
- When people want to say something shy or funny they can say it with this word.

### 3. Laughter Interjection *wkwkwk*



In the data above, it can be seen that there are two conversations on WhatsApp that show laughter interjections *wkwkwk*. In the first conversation, the situation is that a friend invites his friend to come to his office because there is a *halal bihalal* event and the menu provided is *Eid* cake and if there is lunch the speaker says *Alhamdulillah*. The answer to the conversation was responded with a laughter interjection because there was uncertainty whether there would be lunch or not at the event and the interlocutor did not expect lunch at the event. In the second WhatsApp conversation, a friend asked another friend about what homework he was doing at night, which is usually at that hour the interlocutor is already sleeping but this is still online. Then the interlocutor replied that he was alone with his husband where in the conversation he was called brother. Then the speaker responds with the interjection *eciee* and added with the interjection *wkwkwk*. In both situations, it can be seen that the laughing interjection shows something that is considered very funny so that the speaker or the interlocutor feels amused by the stated expression. The semantic explanation of interjection laughs as follows:

#### **The semantic explication for *wkwkwk***

When I said something before,

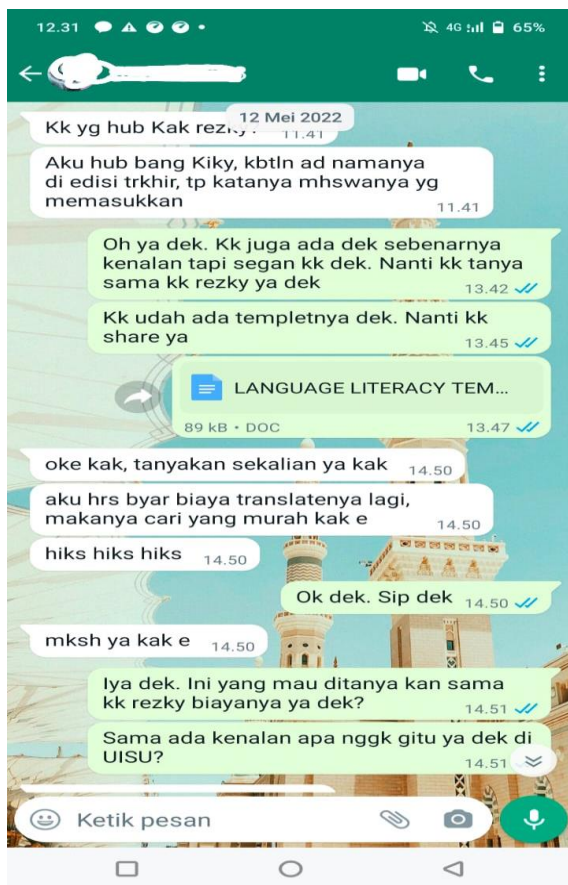
I said it because I wanted people here to laugh [m]

Some people here can think that there is not much to laugh [m] about

I think about this word like;

When people want to say something funny they can say it with this word.

4. Laughter Interjection *hiks hiks hiks*



In the data above, it can be seen that there are two conversations on WhatsApp that show the laughter interjection *hiks hiks hiks*. In the conversation, the speaker asks the interlocutor for help to ask if there are acquaintances to enter the journal at a lower cost because he has to incur additional costs to translate the journal into English again. In his statement, the speaker added the laughter interjection *hiks hiks hiks* at the end of his statement. In this situation, it can be seen that the laughter interjection *hiks hiks hiks* shows a person's embarrassment about a statement he has said. The semantic explication for laughter interjection *hiks hiks hiks* is as follows:

**The semantic explication for *hiks hiks hiks***

When I said something before,  
 I said it because I wanted people here to laugh [m]  
 Some people here can think that there is not much to laugh [m] about  
 I think about this word like;  
 When people want to say something shy they can say it with this word.

**CONCLUSION**

From the data found, it was concluded that the laughter interjections *hahaha*, *hehehe*, *wkwkwk*, and *hiks hiks hiks* are the laughter interjection found from WhatsApp social media. The interjection of laughing *hahaha* indicates a sense of reluctance or discomfort and there is also

a sense of humor felt by the speaker. While the laughter interjection *hehehe* shows shame towards someone or feels bad because the speaker feels disturbing to others or feels reluctant to treat the interlocutor in the conversation. Then there is the laughing interjection *wkwkwk* which shows something that is considered very funny so that the speaker or interlocutor feels amused by the stated expression. Finally, there is an interjection of laughing *hiks hiks hiks*, someone's embarrassment about a statement he has said.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bismillahirrahmanirrohim

I would like to thank Prof. Dra. T. Silvana Sinar, M.A., Ph.D as the lecturer of Scientific Publication subject at Universitas Sumatera Utara. I also would like to thank all my friends at Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al Washliyah to be the subject of the research on WhatsApp social media. This research was conducted for the fulfillment of the scientific publication subject.

## REFERENCES

- Ameka, Felix K. & Wilkins, David P. (2006). *Interjections*. Handbook of Pragmatics. John Benjamins Publishing Company: Amsterdam.
- Dewi, Ni Wayan Putri Shanty & Djarwo, Andrea Pradsna Paramita. (2019). Interjections in the Indonesian Comic Series Next G and The Dutch Comic Series Kik. *International Review of Humanities Studies*. 4(2), pp 914-931.
- Goddard, Cliff. (1998). *Semantic Analysis: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford University Press: USA.
- Hişmanoğlu, Murat. (2010). Interjections In English: Neglected but Important Aspect Of Foreign Language Learning and Teaching. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education*. 6(1), pp. 17-35.
- Levisen, Carsten. (2019). Laughter Interjections; Contribution to Lexical Anthropology of Humor (With Special Reference to Danish). *Scandinavian Studies Language*, 10 (1).
- Mao, Anmin. (2020). A Comparative Study of Interjections in Chinese and English. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*. 10, pp. 315-320.
- Miles, Matthew B, Huberman, A. Michael, & Saldana, Johnny. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook Edition Three*. SAGE: USA.
- Mulyadi & Siregar, Rumnasari K. . 2006. Aplikasi Teori Metabahasa Makna Alami dalam Kajian Makna. *Jurnal LOGAT*, 11 (2): 69-74.
- Shannon, Thomas. (2018). *Hallo! Ätsch! On the semantic analysis of interjection*. University of California, Berkeley.
- Simanihuruk, Bertova & Mulyadi. (2020). Interjection *Bah!* In Batak Toba: A Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach. *Studies in English Language and Education*. 7(1), pp. 209-222.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1991. *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Yatno et al. (2018). Manner and Meaning of Interjection on Medsos Community in Facebook (the Study of Ethnolinguistic). *International Seminar on Recent Language, Literature, and Local Culture Studies*.