Netspeak virtual ethnography as culture in the Kaskus virtual community

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Abstract

The Internet's rapid development has created a new space, namely digital space, in people's life. This digital space, which is created by the advancement in information and communication technology, provides an alternative for the community to get an advantage. The community can engage in a variety of activities. One of them is to communicate. Due to the presence of digital space, a new communication culture by using Internet has emerged. The purpose of this research is to discover how Internet speech (Netspeak) is used in conversation in the Kaskus online community. Virtual ethnography was used as a research method. This study attempted to find out how culture, interactions, and structures shape the cybersocial reality in the Kaskus forum. This study describes various Internet languages that users use to express and communicate what they have in mind. The slang language is used by the Kaskusers to: (1) familiarize themselves with others, (2) express themselves, (3) inform about something, (4) give their regret, (5) insinuate, and (6) to buy and sell. In comparison, emoticons are used as: (1) the sign of friendship, (2) the sign of expressing emotions, (3) the sign of satire, and (4) the sign of telling something.

Keywords: Cyberculture, Internet Language, Netspeak, Kaskus, Virtual Ethnography

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Introduction

The widespread use of Internet in Indonesia has created a new space for people to interact with each other. In the second quarter of 2019-2020, approximately 196.71 million people (73.7 percent) of Indonesia's total population were Internet users (APJII, 2020)The increased and more evenly distributed Internet usage in Indonesia provides an alternative space for people to interact with each other via virtual space. Cyberspace becomes a new option for people to do the interaction, self-expression, and self-actualization.

Many users migrate to virtual space because it has characteristics that are nearly identical to real-life (Bardzell & Odom, 2008; Turkle, 2005). This is consistent with the rise of many social media apps on various digital platforms to facilitate people's communication. Social media is a collection of Internet-based applications that is built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and enables the creation and exchange of user-generated contents(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

With the rapid development today, Internet has entered the fourth phase, namely the interactive communication era phase as a medium for communicating between individuals (Rogers, 1986). This interactive communication occurs as a result of interaction among individuals and groups via a medium as an intermediary. This interactive communication era is distinguished by three key characteristics: interactivity, demassification, and asynchronous.

On the Internet, interactivity refers to direct interaction (face-to-face). With this capability, the interaction and communication carried out by users become more effective and efficient. This communication is made possible by the usage of camera technology on smartphone, laptop, or computer. This technology enables simultaneous verbal and non-verbal communication, thus reducing user misinterpretation.

Demassification is diametrically opposed to the mass media management system centralized in the message production (Metzger, 2017). "The Internet has changed the traditional view of information, from information controlled by the media to information that anyone can control, and users have complete control over the information they provide in the media"(Bell, 2001; Holmes, 2005).

Asynchronous allows users to send and receive messages from anywhere and at any time because the messages are stored on the server for an extended period of time (Nimrod, 2017). Since these three characteristics make it easier for users to interact with each other, the internet, particularly social media, has piqued the Indonesians' interest.

The three main characteristics of the interactive communication era indirectly transform interaction and face-to-face communication culture into cyberculture. Any culture that has developed or is developing as a result of the use of computer networks for communication, entertainment, and business is referred to as cyberculture (Bell, 2001). According to Rulli Nasrullah (2017), cyberspace is a product of interaction among users by using technology. When social values are shared and communication is established in the interaction by using technology, the internet users also produce and share their culture.

Kaskus as a network community

Kaskus is an abbreviation of *kasak-kusuk*. Kaskus is a social media created by the community. It has many distinguish themes, such as games, sports, computers stuff, and so on. KasKus as one of the most popular social media because Kaskus has its community unlike other popular social media such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter (Pratama & Imperiani, 2020).

Kaskus is the largest online community forum in Indonesia (Kaskus, 2016). Kaskus users are known as "Kaskuser." Kaskus is a new world or a second world in society. Kaskus offers a life that is almost the same as real life. On the Kaskus forum, people can interact with other Kaskuser. A Kaskuser can earn income by selling on the Kaskus buy and sell forum (called the FJB) and can find a partner in the heart-to-heart forum. In addition, Kaskus provides various solutions to our problems in the real world.

Like a society in general that has a social system and social structure in it, Kaskus also has a social structure that has their respective roles, admin, co-admin, moderator, regional leader, to the *hansip* (civil defence officer). There are also Kaskuser levels based on the number of posts owned by Kaskuser, the highest Kaskuser levels are: Kaskus freak, Kaskus geek, Kaskus maniac, Kaskus addict, Kaskus holic, Kaskus activist, Kaskuser, and newbie.

Like the general public, Kaskus has general and specific rules according to the moderators of each forum. If this rule is violated, there will be sanctions from the moderators on the Kaskuser who violates the rules, ranging from reprimands, red brick sanctions, and permanent bans. Kaskus users to interact using slang, known as kaskus language. Slang is an informal language that often occurs in conversation and has a high level of familiarity (Pratama & Imperiani, 2020).

Manuel Castell (2002) emphasized that, in today's network society, a meaning (read: culture) can emerge and be reinterpreted because of the

interaction between members or entities in the network. Although entities connected to the Internet come from the real world and have differences at least in terms of demographics, the interactions occurred and technology cause the cyber world to have its own culture. It does not mean that technology determines individuals in creating culture. Technology only gives choices to individuals, including in the creation of language in cyber media (Fuchs, 2008; Jordan, 1999; Wilhelm, 2004). Language on the internet is known as netspeak (Crystal, 2006).

Netspeak as an artifact of CMC

According to David Crystal (2006), the term Netspeak is an alternative to Netlish, Weblish, Internet language, cyberspeak, electronic discourse, electronic language, interactive written discourse, and computer mediated communication (CMC).

The phenomenon of interaction using computer network can be viewed from the perspective of CMC theory. The CMC pattern enables people to interact without ever meeting in person (Thurlow et al., 2004; Walther & Addario, 2001; Zaphiris & Ang, 2009, cited in Arnus, 2015). Communication has become easier and more accessible everywhere. Changes and shifts in communication culture occur as a result of communication events via Internet media. This shift is known as cyber culture.

Cyberculture is a social phenomenon characterized by the use of Internet-based media (Nasrullah, 2018). The Internet has spawned a slew of new modes of communication, such as online community, online game, social network, texting, and various aspects of cyberidentity. Cyberculture refers to any activity that make use of the Internet or computer network (Onggoboyo & Nasrullah, 2011).

The interactions that occur in the cyber world actually occur through the medium of text. Text in its various forms involving symbols (icons) becomes the medium used by users to communicate. In contrast to face-to-face communication where signs such as facial expressions or voice intonation are the determinants in sending and receiving messages, in the cyber world, expressions and intonation are represented by text (the didactic expressions) (Astuti, 2017)

The interactions that occur do not require similarities such as status or level of knowledge (astigmatic). Text communication in cyberspace does not involve the physical appearance of users as in the real world; sometimes in face-to-face communication, someone will take a certain attitude when dealing with someone else because of the stigma that comes first in his mind. Social status, rank, position, and so on that make class stratification in real society (offline) do not apply in cyber media (Amichai-Hamburger &

Vinitzky, 2010; Lee & Lee, 2010). The only "class" that exists is the so-called administrators, but actually they only manage technical things and maintain the communication environment that in fact is determined by other users (Litt & Hargittai, 2016; Tonn & Ridge, 2015)whom do they imagine as their audience? How do users describe this imagined audience? Do they have a sub-audience in mind (e.g., "friends who like reality television").

Marc Smith and Peter Kollock(1999) describes some aspects of communication in cyberspace. The first aspect explains that communication or interaction in the cyber world does not require the presence and similarities between users (aspatial) of cyber media as long as the interaction function through cyber media still exists. They explain that interaction does not have to occur at the same time, the sender and receiver do not have to be in the same location as interaction occurs in two-way communication, both face-to-face and through media such as telephone. However, it does not mean that the content of interaction environment is limited by time. The content and the environment are always "alive" and exist at any time. This is the next aspect explaining that cyber media interaction can be conditioned according to, for example, the schedule desired by the user when he is connected to the network. Communication can occur both in the same (synchronous) and different (asynchronous) space and time conditions.

The development of technology that facilitates communication activity does not only influence the technical diversity of communication media utilized, but also the understanding of the communication text itself. In the new media (second media age), communication is limited to discussion about form or model of media as well as its content, including language (Nasrullah, 2016). The use of text and the development of the text itself can be seen from the communication model of real-time communication or chat (DeAndrea et al., 2010; Giannoulis & Wilde, 2019).

In Netspeak, you write as if you were speaking. That is, all communication texts that are used are very like the conversations in the real world, but they are represented in texts in the form of symbols or icons. The development of cyberculture in Indonesia started with cyber community forums that can reach all levels of society. Some of them were Kaskus, DetikForum, and Indowebster. But in this study, the author will only discuss the development of Kaskus in Indonesia, which has received several awards both locally and internationally. Cyberspace can be examined from two aspects using an ethnographic approach, namely Internet as a culture and Internet as a cultural artifact. The Internet as a culture, which is examined from the view on reality in cyberspace, is a complex and dynamic space; it always changes based on the context of what is being discussed by Internet users (Nasrullah, 2018).

Examining the reality of cyberspace as a cultural study reveals how people communicate in their surroundings by using the Internet. This Internet communication model is less complex than direct or face-to-face communication. It is because someone conducting face-to-face communication uses both verbal and non-verbal communications, whereas someone communicating via Internet only uses images and text. Even emotions are only described through pictorial text (emoticons) that plays a role in the communication process. The face-to-face communication is a more difficult process.

Social media reality is an important artifact for understanding how cyber social reality, and even culture, occurs in the virtual world (Hine, 2000). Users on the Internet have complete control over the languages they use to initiate interactions with other users. Similarly, the selection of Internet languages generates a new variety of languages as a result of the Internet usage in communication (Cantoni & Tardini, 2006; Carr et al., 2012; Walther, 2012; Walther & Addario, 2001). The presence of Internet has altered communication culture. The shift in community interaction and communication culture has also resulted in the conversion of spoken language into written language via Internet mediation, also known as Internet Speaking (Netspeak)(Crystal, 2004; Thurlow et al., 2004). One of the practices of symbolic interaction and communication is the use of language and symbols in Internet interaction.

The objective of this study is to determine the use of language in Internet interaction (Netspeak) as a new culture in Internet communication. The language is constructed by using text and emoticons to convey the users' purpose. In this study, virtual ethnography was used as a method. The virtual ethnographic method can examine cyber environments in depth. To comprehend the present social reality, scholars must immerse themselves in society or a Kaskus group. The purpose of this method is to gather data based on what individuals see and experience in society rather than what the writer sees and feels. Text, emoji, diction and words that Kaskusers frequently use in all Kaskus activities have been collected.

Methods

This research is a qualitative descriptive study (Mulyana, 2006), meaning that the research conducted is synchronous and aims to describe the nature, circumstances, and phenomena of Kaskus slang at the time the research was conducted. The data analyzed is based on the problems formulated previously by following the cognitive domain.This is to explain and examine a phenomenon being studied comprehensively. Therefore, this research will be able to describe what happened and why it happened.

Afterwards, a synthesis will be made based on several theories to getone finding.

The data analyzed is based on the observation on participants both online and offline. And then, based on the results of interactions between individuals and communities in Kaskus.And finally, an analysis based on the captured chatlogs and screenshots is performed. After the data is collected and grouped in such a way, the data is then studied and analyzed comprehensively. In virtual ethnographic research, data analysis is not always done at the end of the work, but also at the time of doing the work. It is because in virtual ethnography, data analysis does not need to be done after a large amount of data has been collected. Data analysis carried out during the research will enrich the researcher to find new questions related to the data obtained, so that the emergence of these new questions will enrich and deepen the research conducted. There are four levels of analysis carried out by researchers in observing the social reality of cyber media. The first level is media space. Second, media documents. Third, media objects. And fourth, experiences.

At the level of media space, researchers observed the interaction space of the Kaskus forum. At the media documents level, the researchers saw that the content in the form of text or symbols had meaning and was published through the Kaskus forum. The text and symbols are representations made by Kaskusers. At the level of media objects, activities and interactions between users were carried out both in micro and macro units. Media objects refer to both the text and the context of text in Kaskus. Kaskusers' experience level bridges the gap between the virtual world with the real world.Kaskus enables anyone to see and reveal about the motives of users for using and publishing as well as commenting the posts.

Result and discussions

Language is a tool for communicating with other people. It is a study on the subculture of a social group in society. Language has its own characteristics according to the mutual agreement between groups of a social community in the real or virtual world. The language in the virtual world interaction is presented in the form of text. Interaction in the virtual world requires Internet as a medium of communication.

The presence of the Internet and the computer in communication technology has changed the way of communicating, both verbally and non-verbally. Communication usually occurs directly (face-to-face) by using language as the verbal codes. Language can be defined as a set of symbols,

with rules for combining these symbols that are used and understood by a community.

Language has some variations or varieties. Reinhard Hartmann & C Stork (1972) classified the variations according to the following criteria: (a) the geographical and social background of the speaker, (b) the medium used, and (c) the subject matter. The variations of language concern all personal matters of the speakers, such as age, education, sex, occupation, level of nobility, socioeconomic condition, and so on. Based on age, we can see the differences in the variations of language used by children, adolescents, adults, and people classified as elderly.

Nowadays, slang is widely used by most young people and also a few older people. This language is temporal and secret. So, people are under the impression that this language is a secret language used by thieves or criminals, when it is not. This confidentiality factor causes the vocabulary used in slang often change according to the interaction between one group with another in the communities. Teenagers use slang in spoken and written varieties, or also in language variety used in certain media, for example, in social networks.

Social networking is a medium that is widely used by slang speakers to communicate with each other remotely via Internet (Setyawati, 2016). The social networks in great demand are Facebook, Kaskus, and Twitter. On these social media platforms, users can write what they are thinking on their "status" as well as comment each other on the "posts" and "status" of their colleagues. In addition, they can also have dialog and comment on each other's posts.

On social networks, slang speakers have dialog in written variety. In written language, you must pay more attention in making sentence to enable readers to understand it well. Therefore, slang speakers often create new vocabulary to communicate in these social networks. For example, the words *ane* and *ente* are often used by Kaskusers in the interaction, both online and offline. The use of slang vocabulary in social networks continuously grow and change according to the trends or events that become hot threads on Kaskus.

Kaskus Language and Emoticons

Language is an essential part in human relationship. Without it, communication would be confusing and difficult. Language makes communication easier, smoother, more practical, and cost-effective. When a communicator knows numerous "different languages," the phenomenon of communication becomes more successful. There are numerous types of language, including argot, akrolek, slang, *prokem,* and others. This linguistic

diversity is used not only in face-to-face communication but also on social media. Netspeak refers to the use of many languages on the Internet media.

The language used on Kaskus denotes the evolution of discourse, including traditional language forms, adaptations of slang and non-standard forms commonly used in the real world (offline). Based on the observation of researchers, the language used in symbolic interactions on Kaskus is of various kinds. For example, "CMIIW" (Correct Me if I'm Wrong) that is usually used in providing information without certainty that the information is true. Another example, "ASL" (Age, Sex, Location) that is used when chatting for the first time to find out the identity of the other person. "CU" (See U) is the term used at the end of the conversation. Language has an important role when you want to see the interactions that occur on the Internet. With the presence of such an Internet language, a person will feel connected and close, moreover, when the language is a special language that is only understood by some people usually in the same demographic.

The use of Netspeak (Kaskus language and emoticons) in interpersonal contact, as well as the use of Kaskus slang in social interactions on Kaskus as a form of intimacy in conversing with others, is an expression in communicating among Kaskusers. The use of Kaskus language makes the relationship among Kaskusers more intimate.

When slang is used in conversation, code swapping occurs. When a communicator speaks two or more languages, code-switching occurs. In a multilingual social setting, code-switching is common among Kaskusers.

When the speaker has a motivation or reason for switching codes, the reasons and motivations become crucial factors to consider during the process. For a speaker, the purpose of code flipping in using language is to bring up a certain topic, quote others, emphasize something, link phrases, repeat words, clarify content, and state identity.

Kaskusers employ code switching in the Kaskus slang language for a variety of reasons, namely familiarizing themselves with others, expressing oneself, informing about something, expressing frustration, insinuating as well as buying and selling on Kaskus.

1. Familiarity

One of some functions of the Kaskus slang is to create an intimate and relaxed atmosphere. Examples of slang to familiarize oneself with others are as follows:

Juragan	Agan	Aganwati
Sista	Admin	Momod
Cendol	Naisinpo	Setubuh

To express cordial greeting in Kaskus, the terms *juragan* and *agan* are used; these words are mostly reserved for male Kaskusers. *Aganwati* and *sista,* on the other hand, are the friendly greeting to female Kaskusers. Due to the increasing number of female Kaskusers on Kaskus, the greeting vocabulary has grown and included *aganwati* and *sista*. This is to differentiate between male and female Kaskusers.

To keep the atmosphere congenial, the terms *admin* and *momod* are used to greet Kaskus owners and Kaskus forum caretakers. Kaskusers call the Kaskus authorities *mimin* and *momod*. When a Kaskuser gets information on Kaskus, the terms *naisinpo* and *setubuh* are used to express intimacy and gratitude. To appreciate the thread offered by other Kaskusers, he simply comments with the *naisinpo* or *setubuh* (meaning that he agrees with the information). The term *cendol* refers to a positive expression of gratitude for Kaskuser's contribution to Kaskus in the form of beneficial knowledge.

2. Self-Expression

There are numerous slang terms utilized by Kaskusers to express themselves on Kaskus, for example, *pertamax* and *pejwan*. A Kaskuser uses *pertamax* and *pejwan* to express himself as the most up-to-date Kaskuser in commenting on discussions. A Kaskuser will be proud of his achievement in obtaining *pertamax.* It means that he is the first one who makes the first comment on a Kaskus forum topic. Meanwhile, Kaskusers who cannot get *pertamax* in a thread can use the word *pejwan* as a remedy. *Pejwan* is "page one" that is written in Indonesian pronunciation.

3. Information

In addition to familiarity and self-expression, Kaskus slang also functions to inform or give information to Kaskusers about anything happens on Kaskus. The following are slang for giving information:

Sedot	Bookmark	FR	Junk	Main tenis
Cacat	IGO	Gath	Sotosop	Dejavu

Kaskusers use the term *sedot* to ask the TS (Thread Starter) to download all materials provided by the TS on the Kaskus forum. While *bookmark* is used to tell the TS to save the thread for subsequent reading. Kaskusers also mark their thread with the term *FR* and *gath*. The thread they share with other Kaskusers usually is about any information or field report on incredible places. *Gath* is used in their post to give information about the community gatherings to be held.

Kaskusers use the terms *junk* and *sotosop* to inform other Kaskusers that the content posted on Kaskus is garbage or junk and violates the forum

rules. If someone makes a *sotosop,* it means that he manipulates pictures whenever he likes. Kaskusers usually comment on any suspicious image.

4. Expression of Disappointment

When someone is annoyed, he often says something unpleasant to hear by using some slang phrases. Likewise, the Kaskusers in the forum often use these terms:

Dodol	Malingsial	Tedjo
Klepon	Hoax	Longcat

The terms *dodol, tedjo,* and *hoax* are used to express dissatisfaction with other Kaskusers. A Kaskuser who does not understand the forum rules is referred to as *dodol* which means foolish or impoverished. *Tedjo* and *hoax* are expressions of dissatisfaction from Kaskusers who feel annoyed because they have spent time reading the thread only to find that it is not understandable and comes from an unknown source. *Tedjo* means unclear, and *hoax* means false information.

Klepon is a term switched from the word "cliponyu," a feature on Kaskus that makes the lounge forum uncomfortable. It is because Kaskusers do not agree if Kaskus is being turned into cliponyu advertisement with inappropriate content. Only 4 percent of people in the lounge forum thought it was useful, while 96 percent thought it was pointless.

5. Satire

Social interactions on Kaskus are inseparable from social tensions. Disagreement is a common social tension on forum, which is why some users resort to satire. Here are a few satirical words on Kaskus:

Roy Sukro	Maho	Hode	Bot
Panastak	Panasbung	Junker	Nubitol

The Kaskusers who disagree with someone's viewpoint will label him as a *panasbung, panastak,* and a *junker*. Labeling, according to Henslin (2007) and Erlianjoni (2015), is used to describe someone by using a specific word or phrase as a part of his self-concept. It will make the others keep calling him using that label. Physical traits, character (homosexuality, for example), and social groups (race and nation) can all contribute to the designation. Typically, the labeling is acquired through social encounters.

Panastak and *panasbung* labeling occurred on Kaskus news and political forum.It started when someone perceived other Kaskuser's viewpoint as being different from what he or most Kaskusers believed. *Panastak* is

a Kaskuser who agrees with the government, whereas *panasbung* is a Kaskuser who opposes the government.

The term *junker* refers to a Kaskuser who breaks forum rules by posting any content that is not relevant to the topic, such as *pertamax, pejwan, asdasdasd,* and others. These junkers are frequently referred to as *bot.*

Nubitol is similar to *junker.* Kaskusers who already have ISO 2000 often treat newcomers like dirt and call them *nubitol.* When newcomers to Kaskus forums do not comprehend the norms of interaction, they're usually dubbed *nubitol* (stupid nubie).

Maho and *hode* are frequently used to mock male Kaskuser who adopts female avatar or username. *Hode* means homo detected.

The term *Roy Sukro* is a satire on Roy Suryo who often interferes in other people's affairs, especially those related to IT issues.

6. Buying and Selling

Slang is employed not only on Kaskus forum interactions, but also in buying and selling activities on FJB, such as:

Sundul	BNWoT	BNIB	Fullset
Afgan	BranKas	COD	Rekber

The terms *BNWoT, BNIB,* and *fullset* are used to indicate the condition of merchandise sold by the sellers. With information like this, the buyers will feel comfortable and confident in making transactions with the sellers.

The terms *COD, rekber,* and *BranKas* relate to the payment method agreed between seller and buyer. After agreeing on the price, both of them should decide the payment method together, whether *COD* or *rekber* to minimize the risk of fraud being committed by both parties.

The term *afgan* refers to any bargain between sellers and buyers. When a buyer bargains for a very low price sadistically for any items—much lower than the price set by the seller, the term *afgan* is frequently used by the seller.

Kaskus emoticons as slang expressions

Emoticons were created in 1982 by Professor Scott Fallman of Carnegie Mellon University in the United States (Cao, 2021). The first emoticon is formed by rotating 90 degrees counterclockwise with a combination of characters in the ASCII code, which can express simple emotions. According to Kang Lo (2008), Internet users have adapted using text into emoticons to help them communicate on the internet. Emoticons are communication tools through verbal cues (text) but also perform non-verbal communication functions (body language). The emoticon is a communication method

that people use when communicating on the Internet to express and vent specific or personal emotions (Cao, 2021).

The use of Kaskus emoticons is the delivery of user emotions through text. A person's feelings of smiling, angry, disappointment, or happiness can only be expressed through pictorial text (emoticons). The use of slang in society has several functions. There are three social functions of slang, namely showing self-identity, conveying user emotions, and achieving politeness (Zhou & Fan, 2013).

Each online community may have different slang language depending on mutual agreement, each member in the community. Language is a symbol that is exchanged and mutually agreed upon by each member of the community. Kaskus Forum has slang language that has different characteristics from slang in other internet forums like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Kaskus users use diction that shows the identity of their community. In addition, Kaskus language has expression symbols in emoticons that represent the user's emotional feelings to express the speaker's attitude to the other person. The third aspect is to achieve politeness in the use of slang, which can be interpreted as politeness in the aspect of language similarity with other members.

The basic assumption of this theory is that people will be motivated to act based on the meanings they assign to other people, things, and events. These meanings are formed from the language they use in communication with others and with themselves, including their own knowledge and experience. Language will help them to become more aware of themselves and their interactions with others in their community.

The exchange of meanings of the symbols developed in this study will be investigated by considering their existence in cyberspace. Interaction in cyberspace is mainly done through the use of symbols that have meaning based on mutual agreement between groups. The limitations of non-verbal messages conveyed through online media encourage the communication experts to create innovations, namely a collection of images that represents non-verbal messages. These images are called emoticons. Emoticons are used to emphasize a statement in communicating online and also emphasize the mood felt by the user. They are used because words alone are not enough to explain the meaning of a message. Emoticons is one of the symbols used to interact on the Kaskus forum. In the interpersonal context, it refers to the development of new methods for conveying emotions in messages. There are four types of emoticons: verbal form, description of physical activity, emphasizing, and smiles (Pramiyanti and Christin, 2014).
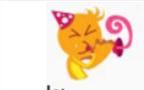
In the era of globalization with the rapid development of the Internet, all cultures must be influenced by other cultures, as well as emoticons. When

someone communicates online, using emoticons can be considered as a new type of nonverbal communication behavior (Cao, 2021). Emoticons in Kaskus are a blending process from various cultures. such as the emoticon "Happy Eid" is an application of Eastern culture, and "Merry Christmas" is the application of Western culture, as well as the use of "cendol" which is the original culture of Indonesia.

Emoticons are used by Internet users as the symbol to communicate. The use of emoticons is growing rapidly along with the development of the WhatsApp application. It is not only used on WhatsApp, but also on other social media and online communities, such as Kaskus. In terms of communication, Kaskusers do not only employ slang in their interactions, but also emoticons in the text as a form of emotional expression. These emoticons can help explaining the communication taking place, similar to face-to-face communication. Kaskus, as an online community, has a wide range of emoticons with various expressions and meanings. The following is a classification of some Kaskus emoticons:

1. Friendship emoticon

By fostering a friendly atmosphere among Kaskusers, you can help to create a good online community atmosphere. Here are some emoticons made by Kaskusers in order to foster friendship in the online community.

No	Icon	Meaning	No	Icon	Meaning
1		Amazed	6		Shake hands
2		Amazed	7		Celebrate
3		Cute	8		Shake hands
4		Cute	9		Recommended seller
5		Spoiled	10		Nice thread

Kaskusers employ the friendship emoticon in a number of threads. This emotion icon is used to convey a Kaskuser's contentment to another. For example, a Kaskuser comments on a thread on the Kaskus forum by expressing friendship:

Kaskuser 1 : "hehe that's good, nice to e-meet you 🤝 "

(Nice thread, nice to meet you, shaking hands emoticon)

Kaskuser 2 : "yes *gan*, nice to e-meet you too 🤝 "

The Kaskuser intends to demonstrate non-verbal expressions in cyber social interactions by using emotion icons as a supplement to the text. The presence of an emotional icon of two people shaking hands conveys a sense of friendship between the Kaskusers who interact on the Kaskus forum.

2. Emoticons to emphasize feelings

Humans require interpersonal relationship to emphasize their feelings. The feelings refer to emotional aspect that influences interpersonal behavior (Pramiyanti and Christin, 2014). One of some functions of emoticons in communication is to emphasize emotions through text and images. The emoticons listed below are used to emphasize feelings of happiness, anger, irritation, fear, confusion and narcissism.

a. Happiness

No	Icon	Meaning	No	Icon	Meaning
1		Happy to get cendol	6		Happily celebrating Eid
2		Happily playing games	7		Show affection
3		Happy and proud of Indonesia	8		Happy to get cendol
4		Happy and in love with Kaskus	9		Happy birthday
5		Happy in marriage	10		Laugh out loud

It is difficult to express someone's happiness through text alone. In cyber interaction, the phrase "I am happy" has no meaning. That's why, the Kaskuser emphasizes his feeling by using emotion icon to express his happiness to others, whether they are happy enough or very happy. Certain emotion icons can be used to represent different levels of happiness in cyber interaction. Here are some examples:

"Oh, the poll results! " (Example 1)

(Emotion icon: big smile)

"Oh, the poll results! " (Example 2)

(Emotion icon: laugh out loud to tears)

The use of these two different emotion icons can demonstrate differences in a person's sense of happiness. In example 1, someone laughs simply by smiling broadly. Whereas in example 2, someone laughs so hard that he bursts into tears. In conclusion, the use of specific emotion icons can describe someone's non-verbal language when interacting in the forum.

b. Anger and Upset

No	Icon	Meaning	No	Icon	Meaning
1		Angry	6		Upset
2		Warning	7		Upset
3		Enraged	8		Disgusted
4		Upset	9		Disgusted

c. Sadness

No	Icon	Meaning	No	Icon	Meaning
1		Regret making one sad	6		Touched
2		Regrettably, there is no hope	7		Grieved
3		Touched			

d.   Fear

No	Icon	Meaning
1		Afraid
2		Run away
3		Run away

e.   Confusion

No	Icon	Meaning
1		Confused
2		Confused

f.   Narcissism

No	Icon	Meaning
1		Pride oneself

The Kaskusers use emotion icons—more than just the text—to emphasize or express their feelings and to make them more understandable. The emotion icons reinforce what they intend in the texts posted on Kaskus forum interactions. In addition to emphasizing Kaskusers' emotions, emotion icons are also used as allusion to other Kaskusers.

1.   Satire

In group communication, social interaction between users is important to identify the differences. Social tension is common to people when they have interaction. Due to the fact that having different opinion is a common social tension on forums, some Kaskusers use satire as a form of reaction to achieve common goals on the Kaskus forum.

No	Icon	Meaning	No	Icon	Meaning
1		Satire on same-sex lovers	3		Innuendo about obscene content
2		Allusion to a piece of news with no obvious source	4		Innuendo about obscene content

Kaskusers usually employ the satirical emotion icons to express their disdain to fellow Kaskusers. When a Kaskuser displays any content or photograph that is not suitable for public consumption (images of human body parts), other Kaskusers feeling disgusted with the images will express it, "Blaarrgh! The picture is absolutely horrible!" along with an emotion icon showing someone vomiting (Picture 3 and 4).

2. Informative Emoticons

In principle, communication (the process of conveying messages/information) occurs exclusively among humans as the living things. However, humans and machines, robots, computers, and other types of cybertech engineering also can communicate with each other (cybernetics, cybertechnology). This type of communication is typically used for three purposes: acknowledging something, telling people something and directing people to do something. Telling people something, as one of some purposes of communication among Kaskusers, is expressed in the form of emoticons.

No	Icon	Meaning	No	Icon	Meaning
1		Requesting TS to repost his thread	3		Informing TS that his thread is in the incorrect room category
2		Notifying Kaskusers that noracial, ethnic and religious issue posts are permitted	4		Telling the Kaskuser to check PM

Kaskusers use this emotion indicator to inform other Kaskusers about something. For instance, a Kaskuser or Thread Starter creates a thread on the forum, and numerous Kaskusers believe they already read the same

thread. They then inform the Thread Starter that the thread was posted before (reposting).

Another example is instructive. A Kaskuser, who got a bitter experience when doing shopping on Kaskus, shares his experience on the Kaskus political news forum. Another Kaskuser will warn him about the infraction—he should not have shared his shopping experience on the political news forum. This topic should have been brought up on the buy-and-sell open letter forum. Kaskusers frequently employ emotion icons in addition to text to convey their message to other Kaskusers.

The use of Netspeak wants to show the linguistic identity of the online community. Netspeak in the Kaskus community is in the form of Kaskus language and Kaskus emoticons. The discussions and emoticons in Kaskus are the results of the construction of various cultures. In the theory of individualism-collectivism, Gerard Hoffstead (1980, as cited by Cao, 2021) argued that,

> In an individualistic society, interpersonal relations are loose and everyone takes care of himself and his family individually; On the other hand, in collectivistic societies, people united from birth with a strong and cohesive internal group, which provides lifelong support for these loyal members. (p. 254)

In Western countries more emphasis on individualism than collectivism. People rarely pay attention to interpersonal relationships, unlike in Eastern countries such as Indonesia. *Gotong royong* is the life goal of Indonesian society which emphasizes harmony and interpersonal relationships for a collective society. Even Eastern people, like in Indonesia are introverted and shy people, often hide their anger with the emoticons "smile" and "shy."

Kaskusers communicate via symbols because it is simple to create symbols and send them to other Kaskusers. In cyber activities, someone can become both a communicant and a communicator at the same time. The importance of meaning for individual acts is highlighted in the symbolic interactionism hypothesis. Anyone who uses emoticons as symbols absolutely has considered to clarify the message delivery in the form of text.

People on the Kaskus forum exchange interpretations with each other. Starting from their personal interaction with the symbols they receive, an intrapersonal dialog occurs. It is absolutely the right of recipient to interpret the message he received as he likes. The way they interpret context of discussion depends on their level of knowledge and experience which in turn builds their identity and self-concept. It evolves from one symbol into

another, from one discussion to another. That is what could be interpreted as life on the Kaskus forum.

Each community group has its own speech community to share. Likewise, the online communities have their own variety of languages. *Language variety* is defined as a term used to refer to one variation of language use. So, language variety is a type or pattern of human speech that varies according to the context of its use in communication or interaction relationship. This is in line with the concept of social dialect or sociolect.

Sociolect is a variety or lect which is thought of as being related to its speakers' social background rather than their geographical background (Trudgill, 2003). In other words, language categorized as sociolect is spoken by a particular social group, class, or subculture which includes parameters such as gender, age, occupation and maybe several other parameters. In the context of this research, the sociolect in question is the use of Internet language (Netspeak) in the Kaskus online community.

Netspeak does not appear spontaneously on Kaskus forums; there are elements that contribute to the use of Netspeak in the conversations on Kaskus forums. On the Kaskus forum, Netspeak is a unique identity that distinguishes Kaskusers from other communities. Slang can bring a breath of fresh air when someone interacts with the others. A slang is a type of communication that reflects someone's feelings and intentions (Setiawan, 2018).

In this study, the authors found that the uses of slang or Netspeak on the Kaskus forum among others are: (1) to familiarize with others, (2) to express oneself (narcissism), (3) to express annoyance, (4) to insinuate, (5) to make a sale and purchase, (6) to emphasize feelings, (7) to inform. Setiawan (2005, 233) reinforced the functions of slang in online communities, namely: (1) slang for antics, (2) slang to relieve boredom, (3) slang to enrich the language, (4) slang to shorten the words/phrases/sentences, (5) slang to make the words sound more polite (euphemism), (6) slang to express attitude or feelings, (7) slang for satire, (8) slang for familiarity or intimacy, (9) slang to indicate differences between groups, and (10) slang for secrecy.

The use of Netspeak on Kaskus is to show the Kaskuser's existence in social interactions in various Kaskus forums. By using Kaskus slang language, a Kaskuser feels more accepted as a part of the Kaskus online community.

Conclusion

Several results were reached after conducting research on Netspeak in the Kaskus virtual community using a virtual ethnographic study approach. In the era of interactive media, the use of Internet as a communication

medium is an alternative to communicate. However, online communication has limitations on expressing non-verbal expressions or language. Language is a study on a subculture that plays an important role. It is so difficult for a Kaskuser to communicate without using language. But, with language, communication can run more easily, smoothly, practically, and economically. Cyber media is used as a part of communication tool, thus giving birth to Netspeak. The presence of Netspeak enables a great transformation in people's communication behavior from the offline to the online space. The use of Netspeak as a tool to communicate has several weaknesses, including the absence of non-verbal language in confirming and strengthening communication messages. The absence of non-verbal language gave birth to a new innovation called emoticon.

Emoticons were created to complement non-verbal language that cannot be expressed in communication through text. The meaning of messages expressed through emoticons is a mutual agreement among the Kaskusers. Emoticons are part of communication on Internet (Netspeak). In virtual forums, Kaskus has a unique language with certain characteristics called Netspeak. Netspeak (slang and emotion icons) is used to form a bond among Kaskusers. Netspeak is not merely a forum activity; it also urges interaction factors to appear on the Kaskus forum. Netspeak in the Kaskus forum is an identity that distinguishes Kaskusers from other communities. Netspeak is used by Kaskusers for: (1) familiarizing themselves with others, (2) expressing themselves, (3) informing about something, (4) expressing regret, (5) insinuating, and (6) buying and selling. While emoticons are used as: (1) sign of friendship, (2) sign to strengthen feelings, (3) sign of satire, and (4) sign to say something.

The current researchers have found that social interaction is evolving from the real world to the virtual world by using social media. The fact that society is increasingly intense in using social media for social interaction confirms that today's society is a virtual society. This is discovered by research using the existing communication research methods. Theoretically, this research can contribute to the development of symbolic interaction theory in explaining the phenomena that occur in a virtual space.

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