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FACULTY OF CULTURE  
AND SOCIETY

# Emojis : Carriers of Culture and Symbols of Identity

A qualitative case study exploring the use of  
Emojis within a community of practice



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## Abstract

The study explored how the use of Emojis – beyond being used just as playful joke markers and tone-setters – shape culture and identity within a community of practice. Through the means of two qualitative Focus Group interviews involving ten members from a local soccer team, the purpose was to examine in-depth participants' motivations for using Emojis, and their feelings about the Emojis that they receive both within and outside their community. Results showed that Emojis – irrespective of shape – are understood as signs representing an individual's inner positive energy and good will; when such signs are used regularly within a community, this contributes to that the community culture emerge as positive and friendly. Expanding on these findings, results also illustrated that Emojis are perceived as symbols of likeness towards the group and that they contribute to the shaping of open and permissive culture in which emotions are allowed to flow freely – an effect which seem to be transferred to their offline environment too. Drawing from theories of Cultural Psychology and Cultural Semiotics, the thesis presents an innovative view of Emojis as both products as well as producers of culture; products because they are graphic representations of emotions which become meaningful cultural signs when posted online, and producers because they affect members' perception of reality within the community of practice. The thesis also conclude that the use of Emojis is closely linked to personality and identity; as identities are continuously shaped through the symbolic association of Emojis, this affect not only how members of a community perceive the individuals using them, but also how we perceive the community in which these identities circulate and operate. This finding paved the way for interesting future studies on personal identity building through Emoji use.

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# 1. Introduction

In contemporary western society, a large part of social relationships are taking place through online communication technologies (Tchokni et al, 2014 p. 1). Due to the lack of non-verbal cues in online communication, such as body language and vocal sounds, Emojis have been developed as an alternate way to convey more nuanced information in online social interaction. While there have been several studies on Emoji use, there have been far too few explorations on how Emojis are operationalized within communities. This micro case study provides insight into these group interactions by employing qualitative methods in the investigation of a particular case, namely a Malmö based soccer team. The study explores in-depth, not only how Emojis are used to enhance jokes and set the tone of messages, but more importantly, how these symbols – as a cultural sign system – function in shaping the culture and identity within a community of practice, both online and offline.

## 1.1 Thesis structure

The thesis is structured in 9 chapters. In chapter 2, I will present the case, why I chose this particular case, and what role I have in it. Next, I will define what I mean with Emojis and present the problem and Research Question. Chapter 3 contains of a review of the main theories that guided my investigation, and thereafter, in chapter 4, I present a review of previous empirical research on Emojis. The methods I used in my study are described in chapter 5, after which the results are presented and analysed in chapter 6. In the final chapters, 7-9, I present the final conclusions, identifies strengths and weaknesses of the study and suggests recommendations for future research.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 The Case: The Queens soccer team

The case of study is a Malmö based Community of Practice, a soccer team consisting of around 35 women. For the purpose of anonymity, I choose not to reveal the team's real name, but will call the team "The Queens" from now on. The Queens was formed in February 2016 by a closed group of friends, and since then, many new players have joined and the team has expanded. The Queens practice soccer two evenings a week. Apart from that, their main communication takes place online, mostly within their closed Facebook Group. This online forum is used for socializing and sharing all kinds of information such as details about upcoming games, parties, and random events. For this project, the Queens soccer team is categorized and defined as a *Community of Practice*, seeing that it consists of a groups of people who has a shared domain of interest (i.e. the members share the same practices), they have a shared concern or a passion for something they do, and they pursue their interests in a domain and learn from each other (Hoadley, 2012; Wenger, 2010) (See theory on Community of Practice, chapter 3.1).

Naturally, as a Media and Communication student and an active member of the soccer team myself, I am interested in how we communicate internally within our community. I particular, I have noticed that most members (those who usually share posts, that is) tend to embed group messages with Emojis regularly, often several Emojis within the same message. I have become curious as to what role these symbols play in shaping our community culture and the identities that operate in it, which is what this thesis is about.

The fact that I am both the investigator as well as a team member of The Queens myself encompasses both strengths and weaknesses (a point I will get back to later), however, I see The Queens as a natural choice of case since, as Adams et al (2015) points out, ideas for research are often guided by the ideas, feelings, and questions we have in our lives, and this is one of those projects. In the next chapter, I will introduce the concept of Emojis and the difference between Emojis and the so-called 'Emoticons'.



## 2.2 Emojis: Definition and concept

An Emoji can be defined as a small digital symbol used to express an idea or concept in digital communication (Oxford Learner's Dictionary and Dicitonary.com). In order to understand Emojis, it is useful to begin by defining the concept of *Emoticons*. Emoticons – a portmanteau word of two English words “emotion” and “icon” (Garrison et al, 2011 p. 114; Wang et al, 2014) – can be defined as non-verbal, visual representation of facial expressions and emotion used in computer-mediated-communication (CMC<sup>1</sup>) (Garrison et al, 2011; Walther & D’Addario, 2001; Hsieh and Tseng, 2017). Because CMC replaces some face-to-face (F2F) interaction, the communication of emotion is lost; consequently, finding ways to enrich the medium is important and Emoticons were developed as a way to replicate some of the non-verbal social and emotional cues in written form (Huang et al., 2008; Wang et al, 2014). Non-verbal cues in communication are those aspects of communication that do not involve words, i.e. they are a result of a person’s internal emotional state which “contain rich social and emotional information conveyed through facial expressions, tones, voice pitches, gestures, postures, and so on” (Wang et al., 2014 p. 456)

The very first Emoticon is said to have been invented by professor Scott E. Fahlman in 1982. Fahlman proposed a series of symbols to indicate mood in an e-mail so as to mark the jokes and thereby prevent miscommunication (Garrison et al, 2011 p. 14). On a message board for Carnegie Mellon University computer scientists, Fahlman wrote

“I propose that the following character sequence for joke markers:

:-) Read it sideways. Actually, it is probably more economical to mark things that are NOT jokes, given current trends. For this, use

:-( “







(See original board thread at <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~sef/Orig-Smiley.htm>). Fahlman’s post was an explicit attempt on one person’s part to, quite creatively, “alert the reader to the fact that the preceding statement should induce a smile rather than be taken seriously” (Churches et al, 2014

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<sup>1/</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, computer-mediated-communication is defined as communication that occurs through technology devices such as e-mail, Instant Messaging and Facebook chat rooms, channels in which many nonverbal cues in face-to-face communication cannot be used (Wang et al., 2014).

p. 197), and in that way to compensate for the absence of non-verbal cues in standard written English (Garrison et al, 2011). In recent years, the use of Emoticons has increased and they have clearly found their way into the lexicon of the computer-using world (Walther and D'Addario, 2001; Churches et al, 2014). As Churches et al. point out, “[i]t is now common practice, in digital communication, to use the character combination “:-)” to indicate a smiling face (2014 p. 196-197). Echoing a similar point, Garrison et al’s study indicated that “users are developing ways of understanding and using Emoticons and have already formed some definite opinions about ‘proper’ usage” (2011 p. 115). Quite rightly, Derks et al. emphasize that given the fact that the use of Emoticons are increasing, this implies that individuals at least feel the need to express some of their emotions with short symbols rather than text (2007 p. 843).

The types of Emoticons vary. Originally, as exemplified in Fahlman’s post (above), Emoticons were symbols composed of typographic letters and special characters with an implied direction from right to left or vice versa (Huang et al, 2008). These symbols include, among others, smile, sad, cry, etc. (ibid) and they are often classified into positive or ‘liking’ Emoticons, such as the smiley ‘:-)’, negative or ‘disliking’ Emoticons, such as the frown ‘:-(', and neutral/ambiguous categories (Wang et al., 2014 p. 457). Later, image-based Emoticons were introduced, leading to an understanding of Emoticons as being either typographic or graphic (See table fig. 1 below for an overview of typographic and graphic Emoticons, inspired from table 3 in Huang et al. 2008 p. 467).

Typographic Emoticons	Graphic Emoticons (Emojis)	Emotion
:-)		Happy
:-(		Sad
:~(		Cry
:-D		Laughing
:-		Uncertain
;-)		Winking

*Fig. 1 Examples of typographic Emoticons vs. graphic Emojis.*

The graphic Emoticons, more correctly defined as ‘Emojis’, as stressed by Hern (2015), are designed using tiny bitmap/vector images. The first digital Emoji was created in the late 1990s by the Japanese communications firm NTT DoCoMo and the name ‘Emoji’ is a contraction of the words ‘e’ and ‘moji’, which roughly translates to pictograph (Hern, 2015). Unlike Emoticons, Hern goes on to explain, “Emojis are actual pictures, of everything from a set of painted nails (💅) to a slightly whimsical ghost (👻). And where Emoticons were invented to portray emotion in environments where nothing but basic text is available, Emoji are actually extensions to the character set used by most operating systems today” (2015). This also means that, while Emoticons primarily are representations of emotions and/or facial expressions, the Emoji can represent just about anything. Thanks to the large variety of Emojis available in many CMC-applications (e.g. Instant Messaging, Facebook, Twitter etc.), this allows users to express emotions, ideas or concepts easily (Huang et al., 2008 p. 467) (See example of Emojis available on iOS 10.2 below, for more examples, see Ochs, 2016).



*Fig. 2 Examples of Emojis available on iOS 10.2*

As will be presented in the literature review (chapter 4), many scholars suggest that Emoticons and Emojis provide at least some of the same utility as non-verbal F2F communication. At this point it is necessary to point out that many researchers choose to use the term ‘Emoticons’ even when referring to the graphic images. In agreement with Hern’s (2015) viewpoint that Emojis and Emoticons are not the same thing, and for the sake of clarity and consistency in this thesis, I will adopt the term ‘Emoji’ whenever referring to the graphic icons/bitmap images (as exemplified in fig. 2 above). This thesis expands on previous research by exploring the impact of these non-verbal cues on social relationships within a community of practice. In the next chapter below, I will present the main focus, approach and purpose of the study.

## 2.4 Purpose and focus

The aim of this study is to explore in-depth how the use of Emojis within a community of practice influence the way in which members relate to each other and make each other up, both individually and as a group, particularly focusing on The Queens soccer team in Malmö, Sweden. The thesis is based on the following main research question:

■ *What role do the use of Emojis play in shaping culture and identities within a community of practice?*

To approach the question, the thesis use a qualitative Focus Group methodology including a number of participants from the case of study (see Methodology, chapter 4). The purpose of this approach is to investigate how Emojis are used and perceived from the perspective of members within the community. The sub-questions that guided the empirical investigation were:

■ *What are the motivations for using Emojis and how do individuals feel and react to Emojis that they receive within and outside their community?*

■ *In what way, if any, do Emojis influence individuals' perception and understanding of a message, the person sending that message, and the situation at large?*

■ *What are the underlying symbolic meanings of the Emojis that are shared within a community of practice, and how do the use of Emojis affect their cultural environment?*

Broadly, this study aims to explore how culture and identity is shaped by members of a community through symbolic message use and interpretation, hence it is situated in the intersection between the field of Media and Communication and the field of Psychology. To narrow my focus, in the next chapter, I will define the concept of culture, identity, and symbolic interpretation from the perspective of Community of Practice theory and through the lens of theories and analytical concepts within Cultural Psychology, and Cultural Semiotics.

## 3. Theory

In this chapter, I will present the theoretical backbone of the study including the advantages and limitations of applying these theories in relation to my study focus. First, I will define a Community

of Practice and outline the key theoretical model of this concept which focus on social learning, meaning making, and identity. Next, I will present relevant analytical concepts developed from the field of Cultural Psychology, which explains how people within a community relate to each other, make each other up, and shape culture through a mutual constitution process. Lastly, since the fundamentals of message interpretation are rooted in Semiotics, which highlights the symbolic nature of communication (Edwards et al., 2016 p. 3), I will outline the most important theories from this field with particular focus on Semiotics of Culture, that is, the study of culture from a semiotic perspective.

### **3.1 Community of Practice**

Communities of Practice can be described as communities (groups of people) who share the same practices (i.e. a concern or a passion for something they do) (Hoadley, 2012 p. 288). The term Community of Practice is usually attributed to Lave and Wenger's work on situated learning (1991), although it was used simultaneously by other scholars such as Brown and Duguid and can be traced back to work by Julian Orr (1990) and Edward Constant (1987). The concept of Community of Practice have raised some critique because the works differ markedly in their conceptualizations of community, learning, power and change, diversity and informality which has caused some confusion in terms of how the concept should be explained and applied (Cox, 2005 p. 527). However, this thesis is based on one of the important common ground shared among the works, namely the view of meaning as locally and socially constructed, and in placing identity<sup>2</sup> as a central to learning (Cox, 2005 p. 528).

#### **3.1.1 Learning, knowledge and identity**

As a theoretical construct, a Community of Practice provides a model of learning and meaning making, namely social learning in which people, through a process of participation and engagement, take up membership and identity with a community which serves as the home of these practices (Hoadley, 2012 p. 299).

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<sup>2</sup>/The notion of 'identity' can be defined as the the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others (Oxford Learners Dictionary). From the perspective of Community of Practice theory, an individual's identity is shaped by the process of practice, the community, and one's relationship with it (Wenger, 2010 p. 3).

As regards the idea of learning, Lave and Wenger put special emphasis on the process-based definition of learning which focus on knowledge generation, application and reproduction of practices within a community (Hoadley, 2012 p. 209). Hoadley explains that knowledge, and therefore learning, are embedded in cultural practices; through continuous participation, members gradually take up its practices and take up more and more of the identity of group membership (Hoadley, 2012). Similarly, Wenger (2010) notes that there is a local logic to practice, an improvisational logic that reflects engagement and sense-making in interaction with one another. Lave and Wenger further describes the concept of Community of Practice as an “intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge”, whereby knowledge, in turn, is seen as co-constructed by members of the group (Lave and Wenger referenced in Hoadley, 2012 p. 289). To be more specific, “Lave and Wenger identify the reproduction (and evolution) of knowledge through the process of joining and identifying with communities as the central and defining phenomenon within a Community of Practice” (Hoadley, 2012 p. 291).

Next to learning and knowledge, the idea of identity is a central element of the theory of Community of Practice. Identity is seen as both collective and individual; it is shaped both inside-out and outside-in, and it is something that individuals are actively engaged in negotiation, and something others do to them (Wenger, 2010 p. 6). An individual within a Community of Practice is seen as a social participant, a meaning-making entity for whom the social worlds is resource for constituting an identity (Wenger, 2010 p. 2). Note here, as Wenger (2010) points out, this meaning-making person is not just a cognitive entity, but it is “a whole person, with a body, a heart, a brain, relationships, aspirations, all the aspects of human experience” (p. 2). Through a process of identification, the practice, the community, and one’s relationship with it become part of one’s identity. This view sees learning as a social becoming which basically means that learning is not just acquiring skills and information; it is becoming a certain person – a knower in a context of a community (ibid).

### 3.1.2 The meaning-making process and the use of technology

The process of meaning-making take form in different ways. One the one hand, members engage directly in activities and conversations and other forms of participation in social life. On the other hand, individuals produce physical artefacts such as words, tools, concepts, methods, stories and so on, that reflect their experience and around which they organize participation (Wenger, 2010 p. 1). Over time, this interplay creates a social history of learning which combines individual and



collective aspects giving rise to a set of criteria and expectations by which participants recognize membership. This history of learning and practice, Wenger (2010 p. 1) explains, becomes an informal and dynamic social structure among the participants, and this is what Community of Practice is. It is the significance of what drives the community, the relationships that shape it, and the identities of members all provide resources for learning (Wenger, 2010 p. 3). It is a dynamic and active process forming an understanding of what matters, which, in turn, gives rise to a perspective on the world (ibid). This viewpoint corresponds with theories within Cultural Psychology, which will be defined in the next chapter.

In the process of learning and meaning-making, scholars have emphasized the role that technology can play in providing a platform for supporting a Community of Practice (Hoadley, 2012 p. 295). This is relevant to outline, seeing that a major part of The Queens communication takes place online. In particular, three areas of technology affordance relevant to Communities of Practice are identified including content, process, and context (CPC). Hoadley (2012) describes the 'content affordance' as the representational abilities of technology, including the ability to store and manipulate information in a variety of formats. Next, the 'process affordance' refers to technology's ability to frame a particular task, activity, or action. Finally, context refers to the ability of technology to shift the social context of the user, e.g. a discussion tool may allow someone to communicate with a much broader audience than face-to-face communication (Hoadley, 2012 p. 296). The main technique of using technology to support Communities of Practice, is to provide tools for discussing with others, i.e. communication technologies. Indeed, sharing a practice is not enough to form a Community of Practice but the practitioners have to be linked to others via social networking tools, such as for example Facebook, in order to form a community (Hoadley, 2012 p. 297). This, Hoadley stress, is made possible through internet which allow possibilities for conversation beyond the community's main channel for communication (in this study, the soccer field).

It is important to question some of the above rather optimistic views of a Community of Practice. First of all, as Wenger (2010) rightly argue, the term community risks connoting harmony and homogeneity more than disagreement and conflict as if assuming that the production of practice within a community is always a positive process. Indeed, a Community of Practice can be dysfunctional, counterproductive and even harmful (Wenger, 2010 p. 2) since sharing practices does not necessarily mean sharing opinions. Apart from this, a common line of critique is that the concept of Communities of Practice focus too much on learning as its foundation and does not

place enough emphasis on issues of power (Cox, 2005; Wenger, 2010). Seeing that the pairing of identity and community is an important component of the effectiveness of power (Wenger, 2010 p. 9), one could argue that power should be more of a central concern. However, for this thesis, power is not of central interest, but the term Community of Practice is used, as suggested by Cox (2005 p. 527), as a conceptual lens through which to examine social construction of meaning within the Queens soccer team community. To understand social construction of culture, next, I will outline some important theories from the field of Cultural Psychology.

## 3.2 Cultural Psychology

Cultural Psychology, originally developed by the American cultural anthropologist Richard A Shweder, is the “study of the ways subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice live together, require each other, and dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up” (Shweder, 1999 p. 1). The notion of *culture* can be defined in many ways. For the purpose of this thesis, culture is defined as a “shared meaning system in which practices, and mental processes and responses are loosely organized (Miller, 1999 p. 85; Eom & Kim, 2014 p. 330). More specifically, a cultural environment is understood, via Eom and Kim (2014), as a set of shared beliefs, values and behaviours that are made cognitively accessible through social practices and interactions.

Shweder’s central theory of Cultural Psychology, a viewpoint which is adopted by this study, is that no cultural environment exists or has identity independent of the way human beings seize meanings from it. This environment, Shweder goes on to explain, “is an intentional world because it is “real” and “factual”, but only as long as there exists a community of persons whose beliefs, desires, emotions, purposes, and other mental representations are directed at it, and are thereby influenced by it” (1999 p. 2) (since intentional things have no “natural” reality or identity separate from human understandings) (Shweder, 1999). I will expand on the idea of ‘reality’ further below.

### 3.2.1 The cycle of mutual constitution

According to Shweder, a principle of Cultural Psychology is that nothing real ‘just is’, but rather, realities are always a product of the way things get represented, implemented, and reacted to (Shweder, 1999 p. 3). Cultural Psychology explains the mutual constitution (or influence) between psyche and cultural contexts (Eom & Kim, 2014 p. 328, emphasis added). One of the viewpoints within this framework is the ‘collective constructionist theory’ which put particular focus on



the mutual-shaping processes by groups of individuals within communities in daily situations. The theory posits that “the co-creation processes between culture and minds occurs via everyday situations that are collectively experienced in specific cultural contexts” (Eom & Kim, 2014 p. 333). The mutual constitution as a framework “explains how human psychological processes, such as cognitive, emotional, motivational, behavioural, and biological processes, are shaped by individuals’ participation in their cultural worlds that are replete with ideas, values, practices, institutions, and artefacts” (Eom & Kim, 2014 p. 329). This cycle of mutual constitution suggests that the human psyche is at the same time a cultural product and a producer of cultural realities (Eom & Kim, 2014 p. 329–331). Eom and Kim (2014 p. 330) propose the following model for capturing the cycle of mutual constitution (see fig. 3 below):

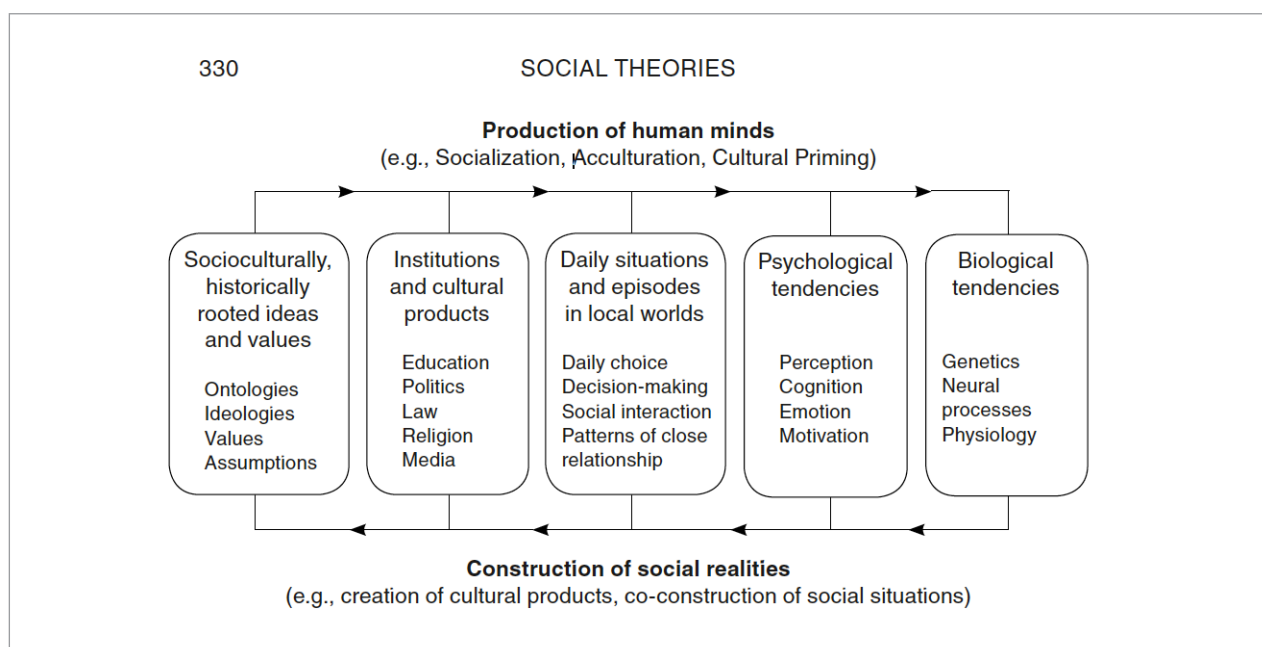


Fig. 3 The cycle of Mutual Constitution.

The above model is proposed by Eom and Kim as a broad tool for conceptualizing the human psyche as both a product and a producer of culture. Although I do not consider the model sufficient in organizing a culture as such (due to the complexity of the notion of culture), I find it is useful in that it encourages simultaneous consideration of multiple levels of divergent aspects of analysis. In line with the purposes of this thesis, the specific methodology developed to substantiate the collective constructionist theory is the situational sampling method; by asking participants to describe certain situations, researchers can analyse how certain situations are defined and constructed in certain cultures and how individuals respond to those situations (Eom and Kim, 2014 p. 333) which is what this thesis aims to do.

While the mutual constitution framework is useful and helps to explain some of the cultural processes, one must certainly question some of the assumptions that are being shared. As stated, the key aspect of the mutual constitution framework is its emphasis on the mutuality of the influences, i.e. that cultural tendencies exist only because of mutual shaping between culture and the human psyche (Eom & Kim, 2014 p. 335). This viewpoint, along with Shweder's argument that "nothing real 'just is'" (1999 p. 3) must be questioned. Miller, for instance, holds that cultural meanings and practices are in many cases non-rational in that they may involve considerations that are not always related to utility or to logic (1999 p. 86). These contradictions, although they do not provide me with answers to my queries, are important as they help to remind us that *what* actually depends on *what* may be very difficult to establish (in fact, given the complexity of the concept of culture, one could argue that it is unlikely to be fully understood by any one investigation).

### 3.3 Cultural Semiotics

The implication of adopting the mutual constitution viewpoint, as discussed above, is the difficulty in establishing in what way the human psyche is regarded as a product as well as a producer of culture (Eom & Kim, 2014 p. 328). Cultural Semiotics is helpful to this issue as it has the task of explaining how and why, symbolically, both can be the case at the same time (Posner, 2004 p. 17). Cultural Semiotics aims to capture a culture from a semiotic perspective. Originally, the concept (Semiotics of Culture) was invented by Jurij Lotman, Boris Uspenskij and a number of other scholars (Sonesson, 2012) however, the term 'Cultural Semiotics' has been used since the German philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1923-29) suggested that it is in symbolic forms of a society that constitute its culture (Posner, 2004 p. 1). As a scientific theory, Cultural Semiotics is concerned to study the models which the members of a culture make of their own culture, in particular to the extent that they oppose it to others cultures (Sonesson, 2012).

Cultural Semiotics is a sub-discipline of Semiotics, therefore, it is useful to begin by outlining some of the basics from this field.

#### 3.3.1 Semiotics: the study of sign processes

Semiotics is the study of meaning-making, codes, signs, and sign processes" (Moriarty, 2002 and 2004). While the traditions vary (literature on Semiotics often point at the importance of

distinguishing between the Peircian tradition of – what became known as – Semiotics and the Saussurian ‘semiology’<sup>2</sup>), the notion of a ‘sign’ is central to the concept of Semiotics.

A sign can be defined as everything which can be taken as significantly substituting something else and which forms meaningful communication (Moriarty, 2002; Yakin & Totu, 2014; Kögler, 2009). In other words, the sign “stands for something” (Kögler, 2009 p. 161). A sign can be conveyed in different ways. On the one hand, it may be something that is in a material form, that is, it explicitly exists and can be distinguished by human senses (Yakin & Totu, 2014 p. 6). These signs, usually conceptualized as ‘signifiers’, can be those which occur by themselves, such as smoke, or there are signs which are carried out by a sender, such as the utterance of the word “fire” (Posner, 2004 p. 3). On a more abstract level, the sign may imply the thing or concept indicated by a signifier and denoted by a sign. This type of sign, often referred to as the ‘signified’, is abstract and physically does not exist (Yakin & Totu, 2014 p. 6). From a Peircian viewpoint, this is called a ‘symbolic sign’ seeing that, in the same way that a flag symbolizes a country, it is connected to its object solely by convention (Moriarty, 2004 p. 230). Saussure proposed that the logic of a sign relationship may be based on a pattern of oppositions, a viewpoint which suggests that you can understand “pretty” only by understanding “ugly”. Based on this perspective, a sign defines not only what something is but also what it isn’t (ibid).

### 3.3.2 The cultural sign process

The conception of a sign as defined in culture is proposed by Ernst Cassirer as involving three aspects: the sign process, the codes, and the media (Posner, 2004 p. 2).

The sign process includes a sign, an interpreter, and a message which is conveyed to the interpreter by the sign (Posner, 2004 p. 3). In communication between humans, signs can be described as the result of somebody’s personal experiences, in other words, semiosis mediated by signs of various kinds such as feelings, body movements, gestures and so on (Rosa & Pievi, 2004 p. 19,19). Kögler (2009 p. 166), accordingly, points at one of the intrinsic dimensions of the sign which is its “intentionality” which means that when we communicate with someone,

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<sup>3</sup>/The Peircian tradition of Semiotics was developed by Charles Sanders Peirce who focused on the meaning interpretation of visual sign relationships. The Saussurian ‘semiology’ is a field within Semiotics developed by Ferdinand de Saussure for analysing language based sign systems and how meaning operates mainly in texts (Moriarty, 2002). In the present study, both directions are relevant seeing that the aim is to explore visual elements in the context of mediated linguistics.

we are usually oriented toward something in the world. These signs are ways of making sense of how events of the surrounding world affect us (Rosa & Pievi, 2004 p. 19,19). When the sign is oriented towards somebody, the receiver, a thought can only be captured if it is mediated (or interpreted) by a sign which, in turn, is understood as conveying meaning to the receiver (Kögler, 2009 p. 161). The understanding of a sign by a receiver (not unlike the sender) then depends on the objects designated, be they real object, inner feelings and mental states (Kögler, 2009 p. 161); in other words it depends on how they perceive the “world”.

The interpretation of a sign by the recipients, possibly intended by the sender, is often described, from the perspective of Cultural Semiotics, as being structurally tied to a *code*. (Posner, 2004). Simply put, a code can be described as a set of semiotic systems. Which types of sign processes are to be seen as cultural depends on, first of all, whether codes are involved and, secondly, what kinds of codes these are (Posner, 2004 p. 4). Most importantly, Posner distinguishes between the natural codes (mainly transferred via biological mechanisms), conventional and artificial codes (which by contrast, are not necessarily transmitted from one generation to the next, but rather, they are the result of established rules and traditions). Individuals who use more or less the same codes in their communication and interpretation of signs are considered to be members of the same culture (Posner, 2004 p. 5), or as Kögler formulates it, they are mediating the same “categorical structures” (2009 p. 164). More specifically, the “use of the same conventional codes in different sign processes makes these processes similar to each other, and thus creates consistency in the interactions between the members of the same culture even when messages vary greatly” (Posner, 2004 p. 5). This consistency, Posner argues, increases when additional factors, such as the “medium”, remain the same over a wide range of different sign processes.

The sign processes belong to the same medium when they, for example, “utilize the same contact matter (physical channel; e.g., air), or operate with similar instruments (technical channel; e.g., the telephone), or occur in the same type of social institution (for example, in a fire department), or serve the same purpose (such as calling for help), or use the same code (for instance the English language)” (Posner, 2004 p. 5). The members of a culture are those individuals who belong to a community, use the same medium (Posner, 2004) and exist in a sphere of meaning that is disclosed through shared symbolic forms (Kögler, 2009 p. 165), that is, in the act of communication, they depend on another consciousness in order for the sign communicated to become meaningful (Kögler, 2009 p. 160).

The theory of Semiotics in relation to Cultural Psychology described above is useful in this thesis because they serve as a frameworks for “analysing how the ‘stands for’ function in sign systems (such as computer mediated Emojis) produces culture and meaning in non-verbal communication situations” (Moriarty, 2002 p. 19). The thesis adopts Sonesson’s viewpoint of Cultural Semiotics which holds that it is not a question of studying culture as it really is, but the way it appears to the members of the culture (2012 p. 244).

One of the implications in applying Semiotics theory to non-verbal elements, as pointed out by Kögler (2009), is that non-verbal language (or non-linguistic sign systems), “derive the full depth of their meaning to a large extent of from embeddedness in linguistically mediated contexts” (p. 166). This causes problems in interpretation. In fact, Moriarty emphasizes that “one of the biggest problems faced by visual communication scholars is sorting out the processes that are intrinsic to visual processing and separating them from language-based processing” (Moriarty, 2002 p. 22). This issue is necessary to take into consideration in this study, seeing that almost all visual material that forms the basis for the analysis in this study (as will be presented shortly) is embedded in text-based messages (I will discuss this further in the final chapters). Apart from that, it is relevant to recognize the complexity of analysing cultures as a sign system. As Posner correctly comments, a society may include many ‘sign users’ (interaction partners) who are organized into overlapping groups and which are capable of behaving as collective sign users (e.g., when they form a community) (2004 p. 17). Moreover, “mentality is made up of many codes which can be variously categorized into code types according to the rules used and the properties of the signifiers and signifieds correlated by them” (ibid). Thus the task of analysing culture through sign systems may be very difficult. However, I do recognize the advantage of applying these theories as they provide a framework for conceptualizing the relationship between the semiotic meaning making process and the cultural process of message interpretation in the investigation of a Community of Practice.

## 4. Literature Review

In this chapter, I will outline the most relevant findings from previous research where Emoticons or Emojis have been object of study. Naturally, due to that the use of Emojis has increased, great effort has been devoted to the study of these symbols. Based on the sources that make up the

Literature Review (which will be presented continuously in the following sections), in general, much of recent research on Emojis have provide a narrowed view of Emojis and most tend to see them as simply playful joke markers, tone setters, (text-) message strengtheners, influencers, sugar coaters, and tools for avoiding misunderstanding in specific CMC situations. While these findings are relevant, most of the previous research do not take into account the impact of Emojis on culture and identity, a gap in research which I aim to fill later in my analysis.

#### 4.1 The playful and humorous Emoji

Speculations on why the use of Emojis increases differ, however, the most common explanation proposed by many researchers (e.g. Hsieh & Tseng, 2017; Huang et al., 2008; Godin, 1993 among others) tend to be that users often find them ‘enjoyable’ or ‘playful’ to use. In Hsieh and Tseng’s empirical research (2017), on the influence of Emojis (in their study referred to as ‘Emoticons’) on social interaction, they discovered that [Emojis] are used to increase ‘information richness’ (p. 405) and that they enable individuals to “enliven online conversation by displaying emotion and humour, which adds to the amusement and *playfulness* experienced by users” (p. 406, emphasis added). In particular, Hsieh and Tseng observed that since Emoticons often represent “appealing characters and humorous gestures” (p. 412), they foster perceived playfulness and fun in the interactive communication process when combined with text (ibid). Similar results were found in Huang, Yen and Zhang’s research (2008) in which they explored the potential effects of Emojis related to the use of Instant Messaging, as they discovered that people find Emojis to be playful and enjoyable to use partly because they are aesthetically pleasant and look amusing. A key limitation of these studies is that they provide a quite simplified view of Emojis as just enjoyable and playful in the moment, and little attention has been given to the potential spillover effects of using these symbols over time. Interestingly though – although it can be considered a side note – Huang et al. (2008 p. 468) suggests that playfulness (defined as a situational interaction characteristic between an individual and the situation) or enjoyment experienced by users significantly affects the adoption of a technology and it may even be the dominant factor. Thus, these findings suggest that Emojis could influence the user’s choice of technology, an interesting point to which I will return in my analysis.

A large body of research clearly show that one of the most frequently mentioned motivations behind the use of Emoticons or Emojis is for expressing humour and/or sarcasm (e.g. Huang et al., 2008; Derks et al., 2007; Hsieh & Tseng, 2017; Seiter, 2005; Godwin, 1994, among



others). For example, Walther and D'Addario, in their study on the impacts of Emoticons on message interpretation in CMC, highlight that “now you can say ‘boy isn’t he intelligent :-)’ and thereby make it clear that you think the subject is an idiot” (Godin, 1993, quoted in Walther & D'Addario, 2001 p. 326). As discussed in previous chapter Mike Godwin rightly argues in the online magazine *Wired* (1994), “no matter how broad the humour or satire, it is safer to remind people that you are being funny”. Given this, and following the logic of patterns of oppositions (Moriarty, 2004), one could argue that Emojis clearly has two functions: on the one hand it is a tool for clarifying what it is (e.g. a joke) but on the other hand it may be a tool for clarifying what it is not (a serious comment), as a sort of damage control. Indeed, as Derks et al. quite rightly observes “because there is no facial or vocal feedback [in CMC], the writer may be uncertain whether the receiver will interpret the message exactly how he or she intended it” (2007 p. 380) which could lead to situations of misunderstandings. I will expand on this further below.

## 4.2 The use of Emojis to prevent misunderstanding

The issue of misunderstanding in CMC has attracted many researchers from various disciplines, some of which have further examined the importance of Emojis to this issue (e.g. Edwards et al., 2016; Kiesler, et al., 1984). In Edwards, Bybee, Frost, Harvey and Navarro’s research, they explored misunderstanding and miscommunication in both F2F and in CMC with focus on the processes of message interpretation. Naturally, they found that when an interaction partner expresses a thought, regardless of how clear the message may seem to the source, another communicator may interpret a somewhat different meaning (Moriarty, 2004; Edwards et al., 2016). This is true for both F2F and CMC, however, in CMC receivers encounter messages with limited non-verbal cues and so must “fill in the blanks” (Edwards et al., 2016 p. 6). Non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, tones, and gestures (Wang et al., 2014 p. 456) are important because they help to accentuate the words they accompany hence they provide additional information and contribute to a more nuanced meaning of a given message (Derks et al., 2017; Garrison et al., 2011). Edwards et al. (2016) stress that CMC communication could provide a greater risk of misunderstanding and sometimes conflict because of the lack of non-verbal information. Accordingly, in Kiesler, Siegel and McGuire’s earlier study on computer communication (1984), they reflected whether the absence of non-verbal cues could weaken social influence:

In traditional forms of communication, head nods, smiles, eye contact, distance, tone of voice, and other non-verbal behaviour give speakers and listeners information they can use to regulate, modify, and control exchanges. Electronic communication may be inefficient for resolving such coordination problems. (Kiesler et al., 1984 p. 1125).

By the time Kiesler et al's study was conducted (1984), the electronic facial expression – if we accept that Fahlman's typographic Emoticon was first – was only two years old, which means that it probably had not yet become established in CMC and therefore its potential was probably still unknown. This becomes clear, as will be discussed below, by looking at more recent studies which express a more optimistic view of communication coordination precisely thanks to the emotional symbols which provide some of the same utility as non-verbal F2F communication; this helps to regulate the response and avoid misunderstandings.

The risk for misunderstandings in CMC has shown to be especially common in neutral, negative-/ or task-oriented contexts (such as work E-mails) and some researchers have studied the role of Emoticons and Emojis in these environments (e.g. Edwards et al; 2016, Wang et al., 104; Derks et al., 2007). Wang, Zhao, Qui and Zhu explored the effects of Emoticons with particular focus on their role in the acceptance of negative feedback in workplaces. Wang et al (2014 p. 455) explain that in workplaces, negative or neutral feedback usually indicates the recipient's performance and is often delivered with the goal of improving task performance; a main challenge for teams using CMC is accepting this feedback. Accordingly, Edwards et al's review of literature points to the fact that workers often misinterpret E-mails or text messages from colleagues as either more emotionally negative or neutral than it was intended (2016 p. 7). As a way to solve this issue, positive Emojis are being increasingly used to “soften the tone of the otherwise critical message and indicate that the negative feedback is not meant to be taken personally” (Wang et al., 2014 p. 461). More specifically, by including the smiley-Emoji [😊], or the Emoticon by the combination of symbols ‘:-)’, the person sending the message – and using that particular sign – conveys the sentiment that he or she is pleased, happy, agreeable or in a similar state of mind hence the meaning of the verbal message is positive (Walther and D'Addario, 2001 p. 328-329). In other words, these signs help to reduce the negative effect in business-related E-mails so that the same message is interpreted more positively simply by being paired with a positive sign (smiley) (Seiter, 2015; Derks et al., 2007 p. 386). In other words, the Emoji contributes to multiple layers of nuanced meanings including the intentions behind the



message. These findings are relevant, however, there are still some relevant issues to be addressed such as how the use of Emojis by colleagues effect how they relate to each other, and how the use of these symbols affect the work culture at large, including jargon and hierarchies.

It is important to acknowledge the fact that positive Emojis in task-oriented contexts, even if they are used with a good intent, may not always be interpreted as an indicator of the feedback provider's goodwill but rather as a poor attempt to 'sugarcoat' and soften the feedback's negativity (Wang et al., 2014 p. 461). In line with Kögler's viewpoint of a cultural sign, the understanding of a sign by a receiver is to a large extent dependent on the way she or he perceives "the world" in that particular moment (Kögler, 2009 p. 161). Additionally, Derks et al. discovered that verbal messages have more influence than the non-verbal part of the message, which means that the Emoji do not have the strength to turn around the valence of the verbal message (2007 p. 386). This is an important comment which contradicts the above rather optimistic, perspectives of Emojis in workplaces. Beyond this, another implication refers to the fact that Emojis themselves can be misread. For instance, Garrison, Remley, Thomas and Wierszewski, who studied Emojis in instant messaging discourse (2011), point at the potential risk that a friendly smile can be read as flirtation or vice versa (p. 113). Moreover, a wink face in an E-mail may be interpreted as a sarcastic attack when it was intended as a sign of friendly banter (Edwards et al., 2016 p. 3).

### 4.3 The social impact of Emojis

Some researchers have attempted to understand the effect of Emojis, not only as 'joke markers' but also as carriers of real emotions which affect how recipients perceive the sender of the message and the situation (Wang et al., 2014 p. 456). Within the general and quite simplistic claims, researchers have found that when 'liking' Emoji are used (such as the smiley: 😊), the recipient forms a positive cognition given that such signs are normally used to show liking toward people; by contrast, when 'disliking' Emojis (such as the frown Emoji: 😞) are used, the Emoji-based cognition is naturally negative (Walther and D'Addario, 2007; Wang et al., 2014 p. 460). In addition, the message sender is perceived as expressing a stronger emotion when they use the same Emoji repeatedly in a message as compared to using it only once (Wang et al., 2014 p. 456). Furthermore, Walther and D'Addario reflected on whether the effect of Emojis might be as great as *or even greater than* that of the message alone (2007 p. 380, emphasis added). This is a very broad comment which, although it was not fully explored in the scope of

Walther and D'Addario's work, points at the possibility that the effect of Emojis may be more complex than we know of. In addition, Hsieh and Tseng's emphasize, based on the perspective that Emojis contribute to the 'playfulness' experienced by users, that play between friends enhance a relationship's emotional capital and positively influences social connectedness (2017 p. 406). Echoing similar ideas, although the significance of this finding is not clear, Tchokni et al. discovered that there may be a strong link between the use of Emojis and social power. Specifically, they noted that "[Emoji] use may be a powerful predictor of social status on both Twitter and Facebook despite being a rather simplistic way of conveying emotion" (Tchokni et al, 2014 p. 6). Tchokni et al. (2014) goes on to argue that individuals who use Emojis often (and positive Emojis in particular) tend to be popular or influential on these types of platforms. Although the present study is not interested in Emojis as indicators of social power as such, these findings are interesting in that they indicate that Emojis may influence social structures more than we know.

#### 4.4 Emoji critique

The previous sections provide a quite optimistic view of Emojis and their purpose, and it is relevant to question the frequent assumption among researchers that these symbols have impacts similar to those of non-verbal cues. Indeed as Walther and D'Addario argue, although Emoticons (and Emojis), may be employed to replicate non-verbal facial expressions and may be associated with non-verbal cues used in F2F, they are not, literally speaking, non-verbal behaviour (2011 p. 329). Whether the act of greeting a person in the hallway may or may not be as personal as sending a message with a smiley-Emoji attached (Huang et al. 2008) is relevant to discuss, in fact, much points to that they are not the same. The most obvious argument that points to their differences is that while it is possible to smile unconsciously in F2F situations, a smiley-face in CMC is different because the characters ":-)" have to be typed out and the smiley-Emoji has to be inserted. This means that the computer generated expression is both slower and less spontaneous (Walther & D'Addario, 2001; Derks et al., 2007 p. 843) which I argue makes it less "real" in that the Emoji is a product – not a consequence – of a person's mind. Furthermore, Emojis have been scrutinized by some language scholars as "an unnecessary and unwelcome intrusion into a well-crafted text" (Provine, Spencer, & Mandell, 2007 p. 305, quoted in Garrison et al., 2011 p. 113) and some consider Emojis to be simply decorative, additive, and unnecessary, and describe them as a crude way of capturing some of the basic features of facial expression (ibid). Nonetheless, I agree with the viewpoint that Emojis at least somewhat

compensate the lack of the non-verbal components in CMC (Garrison et al., 2011 p. 114), although the extent to which Emojis are able to compensate for this lack remains unclear.

## 4.5 Literature review summary

Extant literature on Emojis analyses various aspects of the impact of Emojis. In general, research show that Emojis, as 'playful' characters, tend to be used to enhance jokes set tones, strengthen words and sentences, influence interaction partners, sugarcoat negative feedback, manipulate responses, and so on. As clearly illustrated by these findings, Emojis seem to be perceived as damage control attributes, mostly used to compensate for the lack of non-verbal cues. This, as argued above, is a simplified image of the use of Emojis. Although some studies have indicated that the effect of Emojis might be greater than that of the message alone, researchers have seldom looked beyond the use of immediate and playful effect of Emoji use to document what role they play in shaping communities in the long term. This study is an attempt to fill this gap through the means of qualitative in-depth analysis of Emoji use.

## 5. Methodology

To approach the Research Question, the thesis employs a qualitative micro case study approach. Qualitative methods, Neuman (2005 p. 140) explains, have the advantage of giving researchers rich information about social processes in specific settings. It is a method of exploring in-depth a program, an activity, a process, of one or more individuals (Creswell, 2008 p. 15). I chose this approach with the purpose of exploring closely the human intentions, motivations, emotions, and actions within a program and thereby contribute to existing research with more nuanced, complex, and specific knowledge about particular lives and experiences (rather than general information about large groups of people) (Adams et al., 2015 p. 26). In doing so, I conducted two Focus Group interviews with a number of members from the Case (The Queens soccer team) so as to explore the influence of Emojis from the views of participants.

### 5.1 Focus Group

The Focus Group is a research method frequently used in the social sciences, including Media and Communication. It is particularly useful when researchers seek to avoid stereotypical generalities

and discover, in-depth, participants' meanings and ways of understanding (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996 p. 79). The hallmark of Focus Group method, and my main justification for employing this technique, is their "explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (Morgan, 1997 p. 2). Most importantly, the technique emphasizes the social nature of communication (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996 p. 90) which can reveal aspects of experiences and perspectives that would not be as accessible without group interaction since individuals are often unaware of their own perspectives until they interact with others on a topic (Morgan, 1997 p. 20).

The Focus Group method involves bringing together a group of subjects to discuss an issue in an effort to, not only find out what participants think about an issue, but also how they think about it and why they think the way they do (Morgan, 1997 p. 20). Due to the broadness of the focus in this thesis which seeks to capture complex phenomena, a close up analysis of the various levels of a program is appropriate. Moreover, I chose the Focus Group methodology since it is a form of sharing and comparing which often has a "Yes, but..." quality to it (Morgan, 1997 p. 21). This, I see as a strength in that it opens up for deeper analysis and discussion through the participants themselves.

### 5.1.1 Groups and participants

Although there are no specific rules as to how Focus Groups should be formed, Lunt and Livingstone (1996) emphasize a rule of thumb which holds that "for any given category of people discussing a particular topic there are only so many stories to be told" (p. 83). In addition, Morgan (1997) argues that the goal should be to conduct research with only as many groups as are required to provide a trustworthy answer to the Research Question (p. 44). With these considerations in mind, I arranged two groups interviews of five participants in each group. I am aware that two focus groups may be considered as very few, however, as Morgan points out, that if what they say is highly similar, then this at least provides much safer ground for concluding content, as opposed to having just one group (the problem with having only one group is that it is impossible to tell when the discussion reflects either the unusual composition of that group or the dynamics of that unique set of participants) (Morgan, 1997). Furthermore, I chose to include a small number of participants in each group since small groups are useful when the researcher desires a clear sense of each participant's reaction to a topic (this is enhanced simply because they allow each participant more time to talk) (Morgan, 1997 p. 42)

The participants, all of which were women within the age group 25-34, were recruited based on two main criteria. Firstly, since this study aims to capture within a particular community of practice, it was important that they belonged to the same community. Secondly, I wanted to create groups where people knew each other well, therefore, only team members who had been part of the team for quite some time were recruited (see overview of participants appx. 11.3 p. 62). Due to these specific criteria, the groups turned out quite homogeneous. Although some would argue that Focus Groups should consist of people with different backgrounds, in this study I considered it more important that the participants would feel comfortable enough to express their feelings, share stories, and even show private content from their mobile phones; wide gaps in social background or lifestyle can defeat this requirement (Morgan, 1997 p. 36). Therefore, nowadays, participants are often recruited from a limited number of sources (often only one) (Morgan, 1997 p. 35).

### 5.1.2 Study design

The Focus Groups were semi-structured, which means that they were based on guiding questions/ key points (which I checked off discreetly during the interviews) but allowed participants to make digressions if they so desired. I chose this approach deliberately as a way to allow for related interesting topics to arise through the minds of participants that I might not have thought of. As the moderator in the group, I strived to minimize my own involvement in the discussion in order to “give the participants more opportunity to pursue what interests them” (Morgan, 1997 p. 40). As Morgan rightly states, “if the goal is to learn something new from the participants, then it is best to let them speak for themselves (Morgan, 1997 p. 40). The groups were casually arranged and the discussions were held in my home so as to create a setting that was as informal as possible since this, via Lunt and Livingstone, helps to stimulate group conversation (1996 p. 82). Finally, the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed before coding and analysis. Note here that due to ethical considerations, all names were replaced with fictional names to ensure anonymity.

The discussions were divided in three stages:

#### *Stage 1:*

In stage one I asked participants to scroll through their mobile phones and, while doing so, identify those conversations which included Emojis more or less regularly. During this first stage, I posed open-ended questions aiming to find out what, if anything, the participants considered

interesting based on what they saw in their own content. At this stage I also encouraged participants (those of which agreed to do so) to show the others a piece of conversation from their mobile phones as basis for further discussion.

### *Stage 2:*

In my search for answers as to whether the number of Emojis affected the participants' perception of a message and/or a situation, I implemented an experiment where the groups were exposed to three PDF-slides containing a self-composed neutral message (i.e. the tone of the message was neither remarkably positive nor negative). The messages were verbally identical, however they were significantly different in that they contained various amount of Emojis. The sender of the message was a fictitious person named Katarina Berg (from now on referenced as KB) and the message was originally posted in Facebook. For the purpose of this experiment the messages were pulled out of context and presented in the PDF-file. Each slide (i.e. post) was presented one at a time and the participants were not aware of the second slide while watching the first one, and so on.

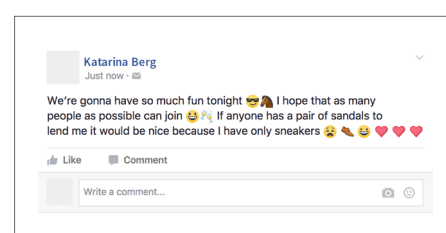
In the first slide, participants were exposed to a message which included two Emojis, one in the middle of the message, and one at the end (see fig. 4). While the participants were watching the slide, I asked questions like "What do you think this person is trying to say?", "Do you consider these Emojis to be important?" and "How does it make you feel?" etc. The second slide consisted of the same message again, however, this time it was composed without Emojis (see fig. 5). I asked similar questions but with reference to the previous slide, for example "What is the main difference between this message and the previous one in how it makes you feel?" Finally, the last slide consisted of the same message again, but in which plenty of random Emojis had been placed at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the message (see fig. 6). Again, similar questions were posed with reference to the previous two slides. (See full Interview Guide in appendix 11.1, page 57. For close-up images of interview material for stage 2, see appendix 11.2, p. 59).



*Fig. 4: Stage 2 (experiment), slide 1, message with few Emojis.*



*Fig. 5: Stage 2 (experiment), slide 2, message with no Emojis.*



*Fig. 3: Stage 2 (experiment), slide 3, message with plenty Emojis.*



Morgan (1997) emphasizes one disadvantage of the less structured interview format which is that it is more difficult to compare from group to group; “in particular, topics will come up in some groups and not in others and the difference in the topics that are raised from group to group makes the data more difficult to analyse than the more structured interview approach produces” (p. 40). With these considerations in mind, for stage two, I formulated the discussion points/questions a bit more directed towards what I wanted to find out. This way I ensured that my questions would be answered and that the groups would be comparable.

### Stage 3:

In stage three, the participants were exposed to a PDF-file containing of a total of 10 screenshots of real posts from the soccer team's mutual Facebook group page (see fig. 7 below). As I scrolled through the document slowly and randomly back and forth, I asked questions with connection to the community to which we all are a part of, questions such as “What impact do the Emojis have in these group messages?” and “How do these messages shape your understanding of the message itself, and of the community as a whole?”. During this stage, I put a special focus on perceiving the participants' reactions to the messages they saw and stopped at the messages that they seemed influenced by in one way or another. The participants were also encouraged think aloud and tell me to stop at messages they wanted to talk about further.

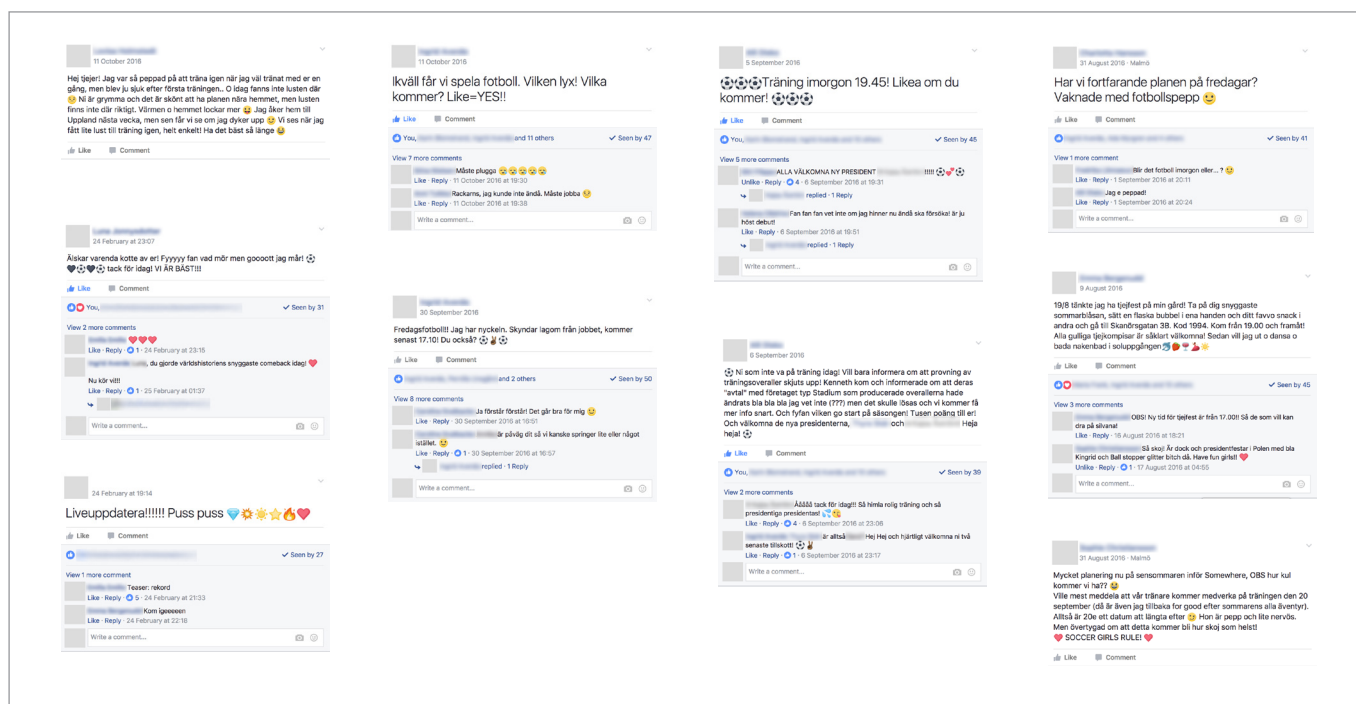


Fig. 7: Screenshots from *The Queen's* Facebook group page. For close-up view of messages, see appx 11.2 p. 60–61

### 5.1.3 Analysis and coding

Inspired by the iterative framework for qualitative data analysis, outlined by Srivastava and Hopwood (2009), I analysed the data through several steps of coding. Coding is an analytical instrument often used in qualitative studies; simply put, qualitative coding is “the hunt for concepts and themes that, when taken together, will provide the best explanation of ‘what’s going on’ in an inquiry” (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009 p. 77; Neuman, 2005). In my hunt for explanations, I began the analysis by reviewing the material carefully while continuously taking notes on those aspects of the interview that I found interesting in relation to my Research Questions. After doing so, I revisited the material and coded it by organizing the data into categories based on patterns, ideas, and relationships that I discovered; this included taking notes on vocabulary, tone of voice and behaviour patterns. By visiting and revisiting the data and connect them with emerging insights, Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) explain, “one progressively refines the study focus and understanding” (p. 77). As I revisited the material the third time I combined relevant categories by looking specifically for repeating ideas expressed by either different respondents or across Focus Groups. The purpose of the third round of coding was to identify larger themes that, when brought together provided answers to my questions.

The questions that served as the framework for the data analysis and coding of the data were inspired by Srivastava and Hopwood’s three-question framework (see Table 1 in Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009 p. 78) combined with the six-question framework outlined by Berkowitz (1997). These frameworks were helpful in my analysis as they take into account the relationship between what the data was telling me and what I wanted to know. The questions, which were slightly modified and re-organised into key- and sub-questions to better fit the purpose of this thesis, were formulated as follows:

#### 1. What is the data telling me?

- What common themes emerge in responses about specific topics? question(s)?
- How are participants’ environments or past experiences related to their behaviour and attitudes?
- Are the patterns that emerge similar to the findings of other studies on the same topic?



## 2. What is it I want to know?

- What interesting stories emerge from the responses in relation to my objectives and theoretical points of interest?

## 3. What is the relationship between what the data is telling me and what I want to know?

- Do any of the patterns suggest that additional data may be needed? Do any of the central questions need to be revised? (Refining the focus and linking back to Research Questions).

While reflecting on these question, I took into consideration the importance of, via Morgan (1997 p. 60), recognizing not only that what individuals do in a group depends on the group context, but also that what happens in any group depends on the individuals who make up the group. In other words the group, not the individual, must be the fundamental unit for analysis (ibid).

# 6. Results and analysis

In this chapter, I will begin by introducing a short overview of participants' general motivations for using Emojis in general, and briefly introduce what this means in relation to Community of Practice and Cultural Psychology theories. Thereafter, drawing from Cultural Semiotics theory, I will discuss participants' understanding of what Emojis symbolizes depending on the context in which they operate. Expanding on these findings, in the sub-chapters that follows, I will analyse how theses symbols influence participants' understanding of situations and identity, and in turn, how Emojis shape the cultural environment within their community of practice.

## 6.1 Participants' motivations for using Emojis

The results of this study showed the majority of participants consider themselves being 'Emoji-users', that is, all participants have learned to use Emojis more or less daily for various purposes although some considered themselves to be more frugal with them than others. Interestingly, several of participants across groups expressed that they, in recent years, have become so accustomed to having Emojis available that they feel limited without them. As one participant put it:

In the beginning I was like ‘no, I will never be one of those who send Emojis... That was how I thought about them a few years ago, like ‘ugh, how dorky’. You could say I belonged to the anti-smiley-gang [...] But in recent years they have started to take over my life” (Fanny, 2017 see original quote in appx. 11.4.2 p. 69).

This underlines Walther and D’Addario’s argument (2001 p. 327) that Emojis have found their way into the online computer lexicon. In fact, one participant explicitly said that she, on several occasions, has felt the urge to switch from the computer to mobile phone only to be able to use Emojis and thereby make the message complete. Accordingly, several pointed out that they feel put off if the Emojis that they need are not available. These findings clearly illustrate, as also observed by Derks et al (2007), that members of The Queens feel the need to express their emotions with short symbols rather than text in CMC, to the extent that it will influence their choice of medium.

The motivations for sending Emojis among participants differ depending on context. Some emphasized that they were particularly helpful in flirting in that these characters allow users to create rebuses which contribute a flirtatious atmosphere, for example by using characters like: “🌳 + 👫 ?” which together meant something like, ‘shall we meet up for a walk?’ (See Eva’s discussion, appx. 11.4.2, p. 69). Many also said, in accordance with much of previous research (e.g. Seiter, 2015; Derks et al, 2007, Wang et al. among others), that they tended to use Emojis as a way to lighten up and/or shape the tone of the message so that it will sound less serious and thereby communicate a sense of positivity and good will. Theoretically speaking, as will be further elaborated on in the following chapters, the Emoji represents not only its material reality (i.e. its signifier) (Yakin & Totu, 2014), but it is also a sign of something else, in this case positivity and good will (I will explain what I mean with ‘positivity’ in the next chapter).

Interestingly, not unlike Huang et al’s argument that people use Emojis because they look amusing (2008 p. 469), a surprising number of participants across groups showed a strong awareness as to how the Emojis appeared on screen. Many mentioned the importance of creating symmetrical ‘boards’ (i.e. several Emojis after one another, like for example: 💦❤️🏀❤️💦), moreover, Emojis were often described as “cute”, “ugly”, “dry”, “cool”, “lame” and so on. This indicates the aesthetic value perceived by the participants.

Apart from that, several expressed that they often tend to use Emojis with friends who frequently used Emojis with them. For instance, Nora in group 2, observed that “sometimes friends can

incite one another to use Emojis leading to that one feels the urge to use them, or simply that the crave to use them increase" (appx. 11.4.1 p. 66). Lise, in the same group, gave an example of this by showing a piece of conversation from her mobile phone in which Emojis were frequently used. Lise confirmed that this person was a typical Emoji user which, in turn, influenced her to respond in similar ways. Through the lens of Cultural Psychology and in line with the idea of Community of Practice, this can be considered a natural consequence of events seeing that Lise and her interaction partner mutually shape the tone of their conversation through the means of Emojis. Over time, this interplay creates a social history of learning giving rise to certain behaviours and expectations on how to behave (Wenger, 2010) within their cultural environment. This is just a brief example of how Emojis play a role in the cultural production between two individuals communicating through digital technologies. In the next chapter, I will present and analyse participants understanding of what Emojis symbolizes for them in different situations and contexts.

## 6.2 Emojis: Carriers of 'positive energy'

By far one of the most frequently mentioned reason for using Emojis – according to most participants in this Case Study – was to embed messages with, what my respondents referred to as, positive energy<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, their understanding of the Emojis that they received was that these reflected the positive and energetic emotions of the sender. This is not to say however, that the participants necessarily agreed on the Emojis signified meaning; on the contrary, during the Focus Group interviews, disagreements as to whether an Emoji represented one thing or the other occurred several times as the associations differed widely. Despite disagreements, the majority of participants asserted that they very rarely, if ever, misunderstand Emojis or the intentions behind them despite some Emojis being completely incomprehensible at a first glance. More specifically, it became clear that the meaning of each Emoji was not important, but rather, it was the sum of the Emojis – *the fact that they were there* – that conveyed signs and codes which, through the lens of Semiotics theory, formed meaningful communication by substituting "something else" (Moriarty, 2002), in this case, 'positive energy'. This indicates that Emojis not only represents its

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<sup>4</sup>/The use of the term 'positive energy' is an attempt to translate the Swedish slang word "pepp", which was often used by participants when describing how they used Emojis. 'Pepp' is an umbrella term which signifies many things, for example 'positive vibes', 'energy', 'power', 'fun', 'encouragement'.

material form, the signifiers (Posner, 2004), but they are abstract representations of emotions that psychically does not exist (Yakin & Totu, 2014 p. 6), but which are understood by the individuals (the sign users) who use the same medium and share the same code system and therefore belong to the same culture (Posner, 2004).

Interestingly, as regards participants' choice of Emojis for expressing positive energy, it turned out that while facial expressions were common, many also used various types of objects. For instance, during stage one, Mikaela shared a short piece of a work-related conversation with her colleague in which Emojis had been used frequently. The types of Emojis that were used included a few smiley-faces, but also objects such as bombs, hearts, french fries and so on. Mikaela demonstrates:

[...] ehm "I'm happy to know that yesterday was successful" he wrote, including the french fries Emoji [🍟]. And then I replied "blablabla and then the bomb [💣]... Yep, a lot of Emojis... [...] here we are halfway through the night, I'm kinda showing that it has been a good night by throwing in a smiley with blinking eye and with the tongue out [😜] and then the arm [💪] and the bomb [💣] again. And then a little further down he responds with a bunch of hearts in different colors [❤️💙💛] "say hello everyone" and I reply "I will, bomb [💣] and then the heart [❤️]. Hihihi!" (appx. 11.4.2 p. 68).

Mikaela explained that the use of these Emojis in this particular context was a way of empowering each other with positive energy (or "pepp"), a viewpoint that was shared among all participants. This clearly reflects the improvisational logic suggested by Wenger (2010), in that it reflects engagement and sense-making in interaction with one another whereby the production of knowledge is continuously co-constructed by members of the group, in this case by Mikaela and her colleague. Most participants in Mikaela's group agreed that these Emojis, irrespective of their material reality, were important in the context because they carried positive emotions which had either been weird – or had taken too long – to express in words. As Mikaela put it, "[w]e could have put it like this 'such great job, you guys are the best, keep up the good work', but you can't write all that stuff because that would just sound really weird" (appx. 11.4.2, p. 68). To clarify what Mikaela means it is useful to compare with F2F situations: In face-to-face conversations, there is no need to verbally describe our emotional intentions behind what we say since our facial expressions and body gestures are already doing that for us. Therefore, continuously explaining

how we feel about everything we say would be very weird indeed (if one's feelings and emotions are not part of the discussion, that is). Consequently, in CMC, expressing emotions with Emojis are easier, faster, and feels less 'weird' than expressing emotions in words.

Interestingly, in contrast to some reports in the literature, the participants' understanding of Emojis as carriers of positive energy seemed to apply, not only to smileys, hearts and other 'positive' Emojis, but also to those which are originally defined as 'negative', such as the frown (😞) or the crying Emoji (😭) (Wang et al., 2014). This, Eva argued, is because Emojis are symbols used for light-hearted contexts, whereby she added that she would "never use an Emoji if I was angry with someone" (appx. 11.4.2 p. 68), to which Malin added that "No! [...] You'd never do the angry Emoji seriously" (ibid). These results clearly contradicts with Wang et al's statement (2014 p. 460) that 'disliking' Emojis contributes to a by the receivers. As a matter of fact, several participants across groups said that they often tend to use the 'negative' Emojis in positive contexts such as the crying Emoji (😭) when they wanted to express that something was *very* cute. From the viewpoint that culture is constituted in symbolic forms (Posner, 2004), combined with the outcome of this study which illustrate evidence that Emojis (irrespective of shape) symbolizes positive energy, it is possible to argue that Emojis may play an important role for the expression of positive intentions since, given the above discussion, words alone are not sufficient nor appropriate for these particular purposes. In the following chapters, I will further analyse what this means both for the situation and for the cultural environment in the long term.

### 6.3 Emojis: Setting the tone and shaping the situation

The results of this study clearly illustrated that the use of Emojis affect how they perceive the situation. Not unlike Wang et al's investigation (2014) which showed that the sender is perceived as expressing a stronger emotion when they use the same Emoji more than once, during the Focus Groups I noticed that the positive energy perceived via Emojis increased significantly when several Emojis was used repeatedly in the same message. This became especially evident in the second stage of the interview (the experimental stage) during which three versions of the same message laid as a basis for discussion.

When exposed to the first slide (see fig 8, p. 38) the immediate reaction among participants was at first quite neutral. Some believed that the Emojis were there to strengthen the verbal message, others said that KB probably wanted to mediate signs indicating that she was in a happy



Fig. 8: Slide 1, message with few Emojis.



Fig. 9: Slide 2, message with no Emojis.

and loving state of mind and that she was “eager to party, or whatever it is about” (Fanny, appx. 11.4.2 p. 70) (these opinions changed remarkably after some reflection, a point to which I will return in the next chapter). Overall, the participants agreed that the Emojis were important in the context and that the message would sound harsh and negative without them. This somewhat aligns with much of previous findings suggesting that Emojis have become a way to soften the tone in work related feedback-messages which otherwise entail the risk of being interpreted as more emotionally negative than it was intended (e.g. Seiter, 2015; Derks et al, 2007). Interestingly though, in my experiment, the message that laid the basis for discussion was neither work-related nor negative as such, yet the participants immediately said that the message would sound negative without the Emojis. This opinion was confirmed as I exposed the participants to the post with no Emojis (the 2nd slide, fig 9 above). The reaction to this post was negative and the participants could not relate to the message. According to Hoadley's theory (2012), a community [of practice] serves as the home of practices to which members, through a process of participation, take up membership and identity (Hoadley, 2012 p. 299). Given participants reaction, as exemplified above, the absence of Emojis clearly made so that the participants did not identify KB's message as part of their community, as they know it. To be sure, this reaction was not only caused by the absence of Emojis but it was probably influenced by how the message was phrased, and by the fact that they had just been exposed to a message which included Emojis. Nevertheless, participants' reaction to the second message undoubtedly different from their reaction to the first slide and several of participants across groups said that the message felt very boring and flat. For instance, Johanna, in group 2, pointed out that “now it feels like they're going to a forest excursion or something, rather than a party [...]” (appx. 11.4.2 p. 70), an opinion to which Nora added “or, like, a conference or something” (ibid). Many also said that they could not relate to the message and some stressed that they would not read it in the first place. In addition, when I asked what



they would write back to KB, several said that they would not respond to it (see discussion on this by both groups, appx. 11.4.1, p. 65 and appx. 11.4.2 p. 70). These comments are important since, in the act of communication, when the sign is oriented towards somebody (the receiver) a thought can only be captured if it is mediated (or interpreted) by a sign which, in turn, is understood as conveying meaning to the receiver (Kögler, 2009 p. 161). The above opinions indicate that the use of Emojis is crucial in the context, to the extent that they are in fact expected in some contexts in order for a message to have a meaningful impact. On a further analysis on this, in line with Garrison et al's comment (2011) that users have formed definite opinions about proper Emoji usage, this "co-creating process of culture and mind" (Eom & Kim, 2014 p. 333) through the use of Emojis have done so that – precisely because Emojis are understood as carriers of positive energy – the absence of Emojis consequently contributes to that the messages emerges as boring, flat, and sometimes negative, even though the message itself is neutral. If it is so, it is reasonable to conclude that Emojis are important in order to build and sustain a culture in which members of the community are willing to engage and interact. To explore this further, I asked participants what they would do if Emojis were not available in these kinds of situations. To this, most of participants immediately responded that they would replace them with exclamation marks. In fact, the majority of participants considered themselves already using an excessive amount of exclamation marks in CMC either instead of – or combined with – Emojis. This makes sense seeing that exclamation marks, similar to Emojis, are used to emphasize words or sentences. However most participants agreed that while exclamation marks were useful, these did not do as good of a job as Emojis which allowed for more nuanced communication of situations and personal identity expression.

## 6.4 Emojis: Expressing personality and shaping identity

An interesting finding that emerged during the Focus Groups was that Emojis seemed to be very much linked to personality and identity. This became evident both in the way in which participants perceive Emojis that they receive, and in the way they use Emojis themselves.

When exposed to the first slide, as discussed in previous chapter, the immediate reaction among participants was neutral and the general understanding was that KB wanted to mediate signs indicating that she was in a happy state of mind (see above). But as the participants continued to discuss this post, on a further reflection many expressed that they actually considered the message to be quite insipid and, as Malin put it, "kinda impersonal" precisely because of the choice of

Emojis, an opinion which was shared across groups. For example, Felicia said that she considered the smiley-Emoji in this particular context to be lame, and Malin said that “the choice of Emojis were kind of dry” (appx. 11.4.2 p. 70). Furthermore, Eva got the impression that KB was not a person (which as a matter of fact was true). Accordingly, Malin believed that “she [KB] does not want to show herself for who she really is” (appx. 11.4.2, p. 70). Along similar lines, many participants across groups felt as if KB was a nervous person that suffered from low self-esteem and that she was worried that no one would turn up (to whichever event). To this, Tove added “I don't think this is gonna be fun actually” (appx 11.4.1 p. 65). In Cultural Semiotics theory, signs in communication are defined as a result of somebody’s personal feelings and/or emotions mediated through sign systems such as facial expressions and gestures (Rosa & Pievi, 2004; Posner, 2004). As the above reflections clearly indicate, KB’s attempt to embed the message with signs conveying positive vibes (if we agree that this was her intent) somewhat fails seeing that the Emojis are perceived, not as a result of KB’s inner state of mind, but as a poor attempt to, if we borrow Wang et al’s word, ‘sugarcoat’ (2014 p. 461) her underlying insecure emotions, as perceived by participants. Clearly, as suggested in Community of Practice theory (Wenger, 2010), KB’s identity is shaped outside-in by the recipients (the participants), and as we see, Emojis plays a significant role in this process.





Although it may be difficult to establish to what extent Emojis are responsible for the participants’ interpretation of KB’s message (seeing that these were embedded in a text message which, to a great extent affects their perception, an issue which I will discuss later), the importance of Emojis to these views was confirmed as we moved over to the third slide (the message with a lot of Emojis) (see fig. 10 below).



Fig. 10: Slide 3, message with plenty of Emojis.



As the participants were exposed to the third slide, the atmosphere in the room changed remarkably whereby some engaged lively in the message and said that they had become more eager to join the party. Note here that at this point, everyone agreed that the message was about a party and nothing else. Further, participants perceived KB as a person with a lot of personality and great self-esteem. This reflects Wengers (2010) idea of the process of identification within a community which holds that the practice, the community, and one's relationship with it become part of one's identity. The experiment clearly demonstrated that the number of Emojis embedded in the message very influenced their perception of KB as a person. As Natalie put it, "Now KB feels like a very self-confident person because she is using those cool glasses, and horses are always cool" (appx. 11.4.1 p. 66). Again note that meaning of each Emoji was not important, but it was the sum of the Emojis that represented the 'coolness' and self-confidence perceived, and one participant, Natalie, particularly liked how KB's message conveyed a sense of promise of what was to come. This experiment demonstrated that the number of Emojis embedded affected not only the situation but also the participants' view of KB's identity and personality (in particular her self-esteem). Interestingly – and perhaps a little contradictory – despite participants unified understanding of the Emojis as not necessarily representing KB's actual emotions in that particular moment, but rather the emotions that she wanted to convey, several participants now expressed that they perceived KB as more 'trustworthy' person thanks to the Emojis. As one participant explained "she surely wouldn't fill out all those Emojis if nothing was gonna happen" (Malin, appx. 11.4.2, p. 71). In other words, these Emojis conveyed conventional cultural codes which the participants could relate to and identify with a finding which, in a way, confirms Tchokni et al's argument that there may be a strong link between Emojis and social power (2014 p. 6).

Another interesting finding that emerged in relation to identity and personality was that most of participants seemed to have established a set of Emojis which they tended to use more frequently than other Emojis. Note here that the Emojis that participants liked to use differed widely and no one seemed to be using the same set of Emojis. For instance, Natalie mentioned that she often used the dancing Emoji () in her messages and explained that for her, this Emoji served as a type of exclamation mark. Others in the group responded surprisingly and said that they would only use this one if they were going out dancing, whereby Natalie responded "No no, for me this one is like 'Whoop!', like power!" (appx. 11.4.1 p. 65). Similarly but differently, Mikaela said that she liked to use the monkey () , Fanny used the arm () , and Malin pointed out the ()

and the fire (🔥) to be her favourites (to give a few examples). Due to the fact that more and more people use computers for communicating (Kiesler et al., 1984) and seeing that individuals tend to use certain sets of Emojis repeatedly, this led me to reflect on whether Emojis may shape our understanding of these individuals. If it is true that identity is both collective and individual process, shaped both inside-out and outside-in (Wenger, 2010) depending on what these Emojis are in turn associated with, this might shape not only how we perceive and treat that person, but also how we perceive the community in which they operate. Furthermore, drawing from Cultural Semiotics theory, although participants choice of Emojis varied greatly, they are clearly using the same conventional codes in their sign processes which leads to constancy in their interactions (Posner, 2004). By using Emojis in similar ways, although the choice of Emoji differ, they mediate categorial structures (Kögler, 2009) which affects our perception of the identity of both individuals and the community. Below I will discuss what sort of perception this leads to from the perspective of the members of The Queens soccer team.

## **6.5 Emojis: Symbols of openness, likeness and emotional freedom**

During stage 3, I scrolled through a PDF containing screenshots from the soccer team's Facebook page. The purpose of this stage was to explore the participants' understanding of the role of Emojis within their community. As becomes clear by viewing the material, most members of the The Queens' Facebook group tend to use Emojis regularly and, as not uncommonly happens, some use the same or similar Emojis repeatedly in the same message.

As I scrolled through the PDF-file I immediately perceived happy and engaging reactions. As one participant expressed it: "I mean, how wonderful we are! I strongly feel... I would like to print out the whole page!" (Fanny, appx. 11.4.2 p. 73). On the question as to whether participants thought the Emojis influenced the environment within the community, many asserted that the Emojis were very influential. Beyond just being carriers of positive energy (as the previous sections have shown) within the context of The Queen's community, Emojis were now described as symbols for an 'open', 'loving', 'permissive', 'receptive' and 'comfortable' atmosphere (to give a few examples). Again, the meaning of individual Emojis did not matter, but rather, it was the sum of the Emojis that contributed to the sense of openness that they described, something which became evident in various ways. For example, at one post which was related to the evening training, a team member had commented that she could not turn up because of study. To this message she had added five crying Emojis at the end (see fig. 11 below).

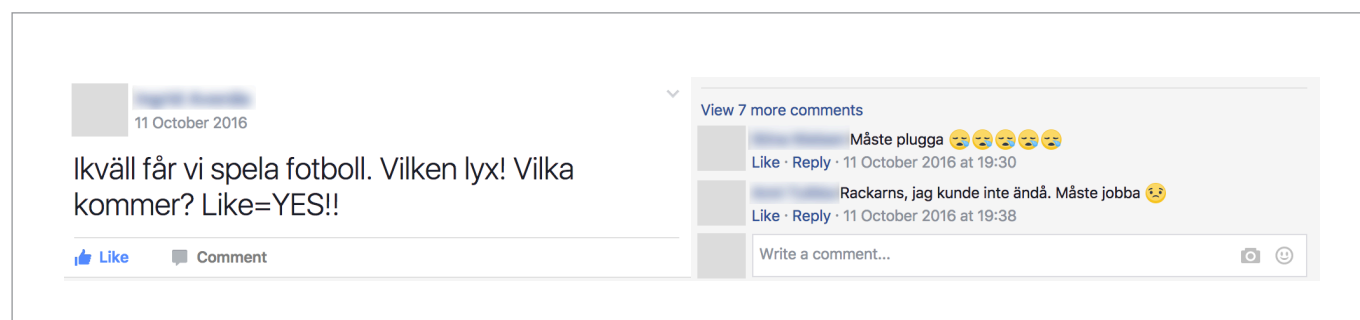


Fig. 11: Post from The Queens Facebook group page.

In discussing this post, many said that these Emojis played a significant role in the context and were “very important” (Malin, appx. 11.4.2 p. 72). From the immediate and obvious perspective, participants observed that the Emojis reinforced that “it is not just a little sad, but it’s so damn sad(!) that the person have to study” (Fanny, appx. 11.4.2 p. 72). From a more abstract perspective, Nora explained that “you want to show the group that you like the group so much, therefore you reinforce every single thing, yeh, with five sad ones” (appx. 11.4.1, p. 67). In other words, these types of Emojis not only reinforce the written message itself, but more importantly – and quite romantically – they are perceived as signs representing emotions of likeness towards the community as a whole. As I continued scrolling back and forth through the feed, several commented on how wonderful it was seeing all the Emojis, not only in terms of what they represented (as just exemplified), but also in terms of how they appeared aesthetically. As Malin simply commented, “who doesn’t like colour?”. Interestingly, Malin also said that using a lot of Emojis were extremely liberating in that they allowed one to, for once, “fully ignore the grammar by simply “pouring in colour” (appx. 11.4.2 p. 74). This indicates that using Emojis in certain contexts may be considered means of breaking the formal rules of what is considered appropriate almost like a statement of freedom.

As for context, Johanna made an important comment saying that if she had seen these messages in her general Facebook feed, she would get the impression that the person was a bit “over-the-top” (appx. 11.4.2 p. 71), but because it is now posted by a friend within a private group, this is the sort of message that she would expect. Johanna’s reflection indicates that different online communities may have different set of rules and beliefs about what amount of Emojis is considered appropriate, whereby The Queens soccer team, through continuous participation and engagement by its members (Hoadley, 2012), has formed a culture in which Emojis are allowed and sometimes expected. This, again, is an example of how history of learning, through informal and dynamic co-construction of culture, has given rise to a set of expectations but also criteria

by which participants recognize membership (Wenger, 2010 p. 1). Regarding the frequent use of Emojis in The Queens' Facebook group, Natalie believed that this could be due to the fact that it is a group consisting of exclusively women. Although these speculations are not conclusive, Natalie thought that this could be the reason why most members of The Queens do not feel that they need to hold back on emotions, consequently leading to that it is considered appropriate to use as many Emojis as you like. The fact that Emojis are being posted frequently in their Facebook group, Natalie continued, in turn contributes to a sense of "open forum where people are very much allowed to feel" (appx. 11.4.1 p. 67).

As discussed earlier, most participants said that they tend to use Emojis with friends who frequently used Emojis with them. In the context of The Queen's Facebook group Emojis are shared not only between two individuals but to everyone who belong to the group, in other words, this platform affords effective communication with a broad audience (Hoadley, 2012). If it is true that the human psyche is at the same time a cultural product as well as a cultural producer (Eom & Kim, 2014 p. 329) and if it is true that Emojis are representations of the human psyche, one could conclude that Emojis are not only cultural products shaped by the individuals who collectively use them and derive meanings from them, but as soon as they are posted, they have become producers of a 'cultural reality' (Eom and Kim, 2014) which influences the audience, i.e. the members of the community, to (continue to) use them. It is tempting to think that this cultural reality, described by participants in this particular case study as positive, open, loving, and receptive may be transmitted to the soccer field consequently contributing to a similar experienced offline cultural environment (I will expand on this below). On the other way around, the positive and energetic environment experienced on the soccer field may, in turn, be transferred online contributing to an open and comfortable online community co-created through the use of emotional signs – *and so it goes*.

Given the above analysis and speculations, it goes without saying what an important role the Emoji play in the shaping of a cultural environment both online and offline. However, as Johanna insightfully observed, it is important to remember that the positive online expressions must be grounded in reality in order to have any significance (reality here referring to the offline environment). Indeed, Johanna goes on to argue, "they [the Emojis] reflect the loving and energetic culture that already permeates the team" (appx. 11.4.2 p. 73). Johanna also added that, although

she liked the Emojis because they helped to spread joy among the group, she pointed out that she would “still like the group as much without the Emojis”. While this is an important comment, Johanna’s view was not fully agreed upon. Mikaela, for instance, believed that the Emojis were very important for the community because they helped to avoid misunderstandings. This opinion was grounded in Mikaela’s previous experience as she was once part of an organisation that also used Facebook as their main communication channel. Mikaela explained that, due to the lack of emotional information, messages often came through as very serious which, in turn, often led to conflict. This, she believed, could have been avoided if Emojis had been used more frequently; in fact, Mikaela stressed that she very well could have felt the same negativity in The Queens too if it wasn’t for the Emojis that confirmed positive intentions and likeness (see Mikaela’s discussion appx. 11.4 p. 72 and 73). This is consistent with much of the previous research (e.g. Edwards et al, 2016; Keisler et al, 1984; Wang et al., 2014) which indicated that CMC situations provide a greater risk of misunderstanding and sometimes conflict precisely because of the lack of non-verbal information, an issue which Emojis help to avoid.

## 7. Conclusion

This thesis has explored the use of Emojis within a Community of Practice, particularly focusing on a Malmö based soccer team. Through the means of two qualitative Focus Groups involving a total of twelve members from the team, I discovered that Emojis have become a major part of the participants everyday online communication. These tiny bitmap images are tools with which it is possible to transfer the emotional energy experienced from the soccer field (their physical communication channel) to their Facebook group (their online environment). As it seems, the majority of team members tend to share Emojis with each other regularly within their community, an everyday activity which, through a circle of collective mutual-shaping and learning process, influences other members to respond in similar ways, and so the circle goes. This forms a cultural sign system to which members identifies membership. More specifically, these signs, irrespective of shape, are translated to cultural codes which members can relate to and easily identify with. Consequently, through history of learning, using Emojis in some contexts have become a cultural norm in The Queens online environment, to the extent that they sometimes are expected in order to have a meaningful impact on the receiver. In addition, not unlike previous

research, the use of Emojis has become a way to avoid miscommunication which could potentially lead to misunderstanding and conflict. Drawing from theories of patterns of oppositions (Moriarty, 2004) Emojis are clearly signs substituting not only what it is but also what it isn't seeing that they help to clarify that neutral messages should not be perceived negatively.

The results also illustrated that – irrespective of whether an Emoji represents a smile, a frown, or french fries – these symbols are generally understood as signs representing an individual's inner positive energy (however defined), an understanding which increased significantly when several Emojis were used repeatedly in one and the same message. From the theoretical point of view that culture is constituted in symbolic forms (Posner, 2004) Emojis contribute to that the community, and the identities that make up the community, appears as positive, trustworthy and energetic. As of identity, the findings of both the present and previous studies are quite convincing in that the use of Emojis is linked to personality and identity. Not far from previous research (e.g. Tchokni et al., 2014) which discovered a link between Emojis and social power and status, the data obtained in the present study indicated that when Emojis are used frequently by one individual, these represents symbols of self-esteem, strong personality and trustworthiness. Over time, while this person's identity is shaped both inside-out and outside-in, the members learn from these actions that it is okay to express one's personality and identity within the particular context, leading to a sense of openness, trustworthiness, and permissiveness as perceived by the members of the community. This, although the evidence is limited, may have an affect on their offline environment too. Hence, in the light of Cultural Psychology theories, Emojis seem to play an important role in shaping culture and identity within a community of practice; these symbolic carriers of culture shapes the perception of what is real and factual (Shweder 1999 p. 2) which in this case is that of a positive community where emotions are allowed to flow freely.

Summing up the results, through the lens of Cultural Psychology and with support from Semiotics theory, the results of this study illustrate that Emojis are indeed both products as well as producers of culture; products because they are carriers of emotion rooted in (the offline) 'reality' and therefore become meaningful signs when posted online, and producers because they affect members' perception of the 'reality' in the Community of Practice to which they belong, and thereby influence users to use them and re-produce them.



## 8. Discussion

There is no doubt that the use of Emojis has increased remarkably, and the way I see it, they will continue to do so although their appearance are likely to change, and the agreement of what is considered 'proper usage' will change too. Previous observations that Emojis may range from joke markers through tone setters, response manipulators, flirtation marks, sugarcoats and communication coordinators, were confirmed in this study and are not new, but the more powerful function of Emojis as signs of trustworthiness, identity building blocks, carriers of culture, and symbols of emotional freedom provided an additional angle pointing at that these symbols represent both belonging and individuality at the same time. Interestingly, everyone seem to have their own associations and relationship with Emojis, but when used in group conversations within a community, over time they form a common understanding; it is this common understanding shapes their cultural environment. At this point I would like to link back to a previous discussions and state that the debate as to whether or not Emojis provide the same utility as non-verbal communication is futile. The conception that Emojis simply have impacts similar to those of non-verbal cues in F2F (and have functions similar to these) is far too simplistic as this conception captures only a fraction of the potential effect of these seemingly innocent, but actually really powerful symbols. The study fills a gap in research by providing qualitative insight into how Emojis are operationalized within a community, not only as markers used for jokes and damage control (as indicated by much of previous research), but more importantly, as carriers of culture and identities that continuously build and sustain a community of practice. These findings emerged from a qualitative in-depth analysis on micro data, based on the perspective of Community of Practice and through the lens of Cultural Psychology, and Cultural Semiotics theory. Note however, as stressed by Miller (1999), some things might just happen for no particular reason, a point of fact which questions all of the theories applied. Moreover, the results are by all means affected by me as an investigator, my choice of method and material, and by the group interaction, as will be discussed in the following chapters below.

### 8.1 Methodology and material

Regarding my choice of method, Focus Group methodology, some critically argue that generalizations cannot be made from Focus Group data because the results are not reliable (Lunt



& Livingstone, 1996 p. 89). However, I agree with the more recent views of the method which challenge this and take more seriously the group nature of the discussion, as discussed in the Methodology chapter 5.1 (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996; Morgan, 1997). As of reliability, Morgan explains that both the strengths and the weaknesses of focus groups flow directly from their two defining features: the reliance on the researcher's focus and the group's interaction (1997 p. 13).

As regards the fact that I am both an investigator as well as an insider of the soccer team encompasses both strengths and weaknesses – strengths, since being an insider provides insight into social experiences that can be difficult to observe directly (Adams et al., 2015 p. 34), and weaknesses, since being an insider means that the project is somewhat biased which affects the reliability of data. However, in line with Méndez (2014) opinion, I refrain from the view that researchers are supposed to be as distant as possible from the research in order to present as objective truth as possible. The way I see it, in line with recent opinions, objective truth can never be captured anyway seeing that personal perspectives and interests more or less tend to influence all research projects (Mendez, 2014). Regarding my role as the moderator, it is very important to consider my own position in the interview and realize that the decisions made, knowingly or unknowingly, may affect significantly the resulting discussion and have implications for sampling, analytical coding, validity, and therefore reliability (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996 p. 80-83). The researcher's influence on the data is an issue in almost all qualitative research, and those who rely on Focus Groups must certainly pay attention to it (Morgan, 1997 p. 14-15). As I explained in Methodology, I posed broad questions in the beginning of the Focus Groups so as to avoid directing the participants towards specific topics of discussion. However in hindsight, I realize that, since all of participants in this study are my friends, this means that they might have been interested in helping me reach the conclusions that they thought I was looking for (even though I did not inform them about my objectives in beforehand).

As explained, for this study I relied on group interaction to produce data for analysis. To ensure that the participants would feel comfortable enough to share stories and private content with each other, I formed groups where participants knew each other well so as to create a natural environment. Although this may be considered an appropriate approach, I am aware that this may have had the opposite effect as I realize in retrospect that there is a possibility that participants instead withheld some details and felt reluctant to share private information precisely because they knew each other. Furthermore, as rightly pointed out by Morgan (1997), the fact that

I created and directed the groups made them distinctly less natural and may be a source of weakness itself “as we can never be sure of how natural the interactions are” (p. 8-9). Apart from the influence of the moderator on the group interaction, Morgan (1997) also points out that the group itself may influence the data. The moderator’s role requires him or her to monitor a complex social interaction, encourage contributions, and manage disruption, and other problematic group issues (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996 p. 82). Since this can be very difficult to manage, some opinions may come through as more important than others (Morgan, 1997 p. 11-15; Lunt & Livingstone, 1996). This was something that I noticed during fieldwork, and in my Results and analysis section, I chose to highlight some quotes while other quotes were left out. This is not to say, however, that some participants contributed to more interesting insights than others. On the contrary, it was often the case that one participant’s think aloud reflection led to the final interesting insight provided by another participant, whose quote I chose to include in the analysis. Beyond this, data can be misleading insofar as interpretations may be collectively constructed through group interaction and groups may discuss with enthusiasm an issue to which they may actually ascribe little importance (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996 p. 91). This was especially true in my study seeing I asked the participants to analyse the messages in a way that they normally would not do. One participant made a comment on this saying that “well, I rarely ever dissect messages like this normally, but if I am to do it...” (appx. 11.4.2 p. 70). This quote clearly points to the fact that the situation was far from neutral. Although this doesn’t have to be a drawback, it is important to take it into consideration that the results may have been different if I had designed the study differently or if I had chosen a different method. In retrospect I realize that a multi-method approach would have been beneficial so as to enhance triangulation. Specifically, I believe that a quantitative angle to the study would have been useful in order to determine some of my arguments.

Apart from the main methodological concerns discussed above, the choice of material is critical for the results since this very much determines what can be seen and what can be thought about a topic. The main problem with my choice of material was that nearly all of it was positively angled. More specifically, the Emojis that formed the basis for analysis and discussion were embedded in positive contexts. For example, during stage 1, some participants shared friendly and loving conversations with family and peers, and during stage 3, I exposed the participants with screenshots from the soccer team’s page where Emojis were embedded within friendly and loving text-messages; consequently and unsurprisingly, Emojis are understood as symbolizing

positive energy. This weakness in choice of material was somewhat substantiated by the more neutral material used for stage 2, the three-variation message by the fictitious person Katarina Berg. However, although this material was useful as it helped to support some of my arguments, the material was weak in that the message turned out almost too neutral and unrealistic. In fact, several of the participants said they would never write a message like that, whereby some immediately gave suggestions on how it could be rephrased for better impact. This suggests a weakness in this choice of material seeing that the message seemed very unnatural to them, a fact which affects the reliability of the results.

On a further reflection it is important to remember that the opinions expressed by participants were not only based on the Emojis found in the material, but they were also based on the messages in which they were embedded. Indeed, the challenge in analysing non-verbal elements based on visual communication theories in the context of linguistics, as stressed by Kögler (2009) and Moriarty (2002) is sorting out the processes that are intrinsic to visual processing and separating them from language-based processing. In the present study, this issue is difficult to avoid seeing that messages with only Emojis and no text would be far too unrealistic to provide reliable results since Emojis are often used within text-messages.

## 8.2 Ethics

As in all empirical and qualitative projects, one the main dilemmas involved when conducting Focus Groups concerns the involvement of study participants. Most importantly, the ethical issues concern the protection of participants' privacy, especially when audio recording is the primary means of data collection (Morgan, 1997 p. 31). Because of the difficulty to capture what everyone says during a group discussion I used audio recording to collect my data, however, to protect participants' privacy, the recordings were not shared with anyone and the interviews were transcribed using fictional names. Moreover, in the PDF in stage 3 (the file containing screenshots of posts from The Queen's Facebook page), all names were blurred to avoid the risk of accidentally naming and shaming other members of the community.

Another ethical dilemma concerns the fact that I asked the participants not only to share personal stories and experiences, but I also asked them to share private conversations from their phones which involved other people. This implies additional ethical issues since these interaction partners are neither aware nor have they agreed to be a part of the study. Note here

that participants were encouraged to share conversations only if they felt comfortable in doing so. Nonetheless, as Neuman (2005) correctly point out, many subjects are unaware or less concerned about protecting their privacy than are researchers. Therefore it is the researcher's obligation to protect them (ibid). In order to protect the privacy of the participants and their interaction partners, I refrained from creating digital images of the conversations and focused on analysing the group's discussion about these conversations (and not the message content as such). Despite the attempts to solve the ethical issues, to a large extent the issues remain since "[o]ne unique ethical issue in focus groups is the fact that what participants tell the researcher is inherently shared with other group participants as well" (Morgan, 1997 p. 32). This raises serious invasion-of-privacy concerns since what other participants are doing with the information is beyond the researcher's control (ibid). This is indeed a problematic issue, however although I cannot be sure, I hope that the participants are respectful to each other and to what was being shared. Furthermore, the questions in the discussion were formulated in such way that they controlled the focus to be on Emojis rather than the actual content itself. Therefore, I do not think the participants managed (or at all wanted) to capture what the conversations were about.

## 9. Final reflection

The present study almost raises more questions than answers. Due to this wide range of Emoji use and interpretation, it is interesting to reflect on the potential spillover of these symbols on identity. For example, I discovered that most participants seemed to be using some Emojis more frequently than others. As discussed in the analysis, depending on what associations arise when we use and receive these Emojis, this may shape our understanding of that person. This was an important finding that provided an interesting avenue for future research, still within the intersection between the field of Media and Communication and Psychology, focusing on how the act of using Emojis affects our perception, not only of others, but also of ourselves. Specifically, I am interested in how the use Emojis affect the sender while being typed out, for example, will typing out an Emoji make us happier? Expanding on this, I am also interested in the spillover effects of these actions, that is, when we see our Emojis appear in the feed attached to our profile name, will they affect our perception of our own identity, who we are and how we feel? Further, it is also interesting to consider how the use of Emojis affect how we communicate offline. Given

that we are becoming more and more used to expressing our emotions by the means of Emojis, this might lead to that our F2F expressions may begin to feel insufficient to communicate the feeling we wish to express as we may find that an Emoji explains it better in some situations. Thus, for future explorations on non-verbal communication, it would be interesting to look into how the use of symbolic expressions in CMC influence our facial expressions in F2F situations.

As a final reflection I wonder whether the continuous and emerging flow of positive symbols within The Queen's Facebook group is helpful or in fact harmful for the group development. The positivity that permeates their online channel, in a way, sets the tone for how to behave within the community, consequently leading to an environment where negativity is not allowed. If members feel they are not allowed to express dissatisfaction, opinions, or sadness towards the group, this may affect the community negatively seeing that it prevents the group from constructive development. Thus, for future research it would be interesting to conduct a comparative analysis of the Emoji effect on communities by exploring a number of different communities on different levels – possibly looking at differences between gender, country, or shared practices – so as to establish how Emojis, as carriers of culture and symbols of identity, function in building, sustaining, forming and developing communities.

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# 11 Appendices

## 11.1 Interview Guide

### Considerations

- Max 1 hour
  - Be the researcher – press them for information (even the information they may seem obvious “because we’re friends”).
  - Continuously write methodological reflections, identify strengths and weaknesses.
  - Reflect on the ethical dilemma involved in asking participants to express their feelings and show content from their private mobile phones.
- 

### Questions/ discussion points

#### *Stage 1:*

Q: Go and find a conversation on your phone – either a private one-to-one conversation, or a group conversation – in which Emojis have been posted repeatedly, either by you, by the interaction partners, or both.

*Let participants scroll through examples from their phones, then ask:*

1. What do these emojis represent? Give examples (let participants discuss and show each other their messages)
  2. What are your understanding of the purpose of these emojis? (point at examples in participants private messages)
  3. Do you see a pattern in the way you send/receive emojis? E.g. context, people, types of messages etc.
- 

#### *Stage 2:*

*Show Slide 1, a neutral message including one or two Emojis. Ask:*

1. What do you think this person is trying to say?
2. What sort of situation you consider this message to be equal to in FTF-communication? (tone of voice, expression, enthusiasm etc.)

3. Do you think the emojis embedded in the message reflect the sender's feelings right now?  
(this is "yes" or "no" question which I hope will lead to a discussion).
4. How does this message make you feel?
5. How would you respond?
6. Do you consider these emoticons to be important to include in the message?

*Show Slide 2, a neutral message with no Emojis. Ask:*

1. What is the main difference between this message and the previous one?
2. How do you read this message, as you interpret it (tone of voice, expression, enthusiasm etc.)
3. How does this message make you feel?
4. How would you respond?

*Show Slide 3, a neutral message with plenty Emojis. Ask:*

1. What do you think this person is trying to say now?
  2. What sort of situation you consider this message to be equal to in FTF-communication?  
(tone of voice, expression, enthusiasm etc.)
  3. Do you think the emojis embedded in the message reflect the sender's feelings right now?  
(this is "yes" or "no" question which I hope will lead to a discussion).
  4. How does this message make you feel?
  5. How would you respond?
  6. Do you consider these emoticons to be important to include in the message?
- 

### *Stage 3:*

*Show a message from The Queen's Facebook page. Ask:*

1. What impact does the emojis have in these group messages?
2. How do these messages shape your understanding of the message itself, and on the group as a whole?

## 11.2 Interview material

Stage 2: Self composed messages for experiment.

### Slide 1



### Slide 2

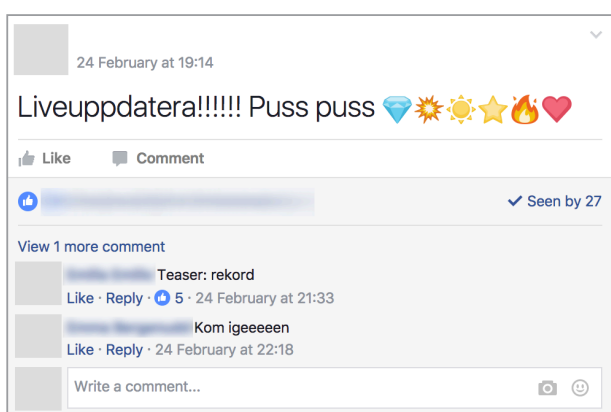


### Slide 3



## Stage 3: Screenshots from the soccer team's Facebook page

The below material (see also next page) is a selection of posts collected from The Queen's Facebook page. The posts, which were randomly selected, corresponds to the daily flow of messages posted in the group daily.



## Stage 3: Screenshots from the soccer team's Facebook page, cont.





### 11.3 Overview of participants

All participants are members of the Community of study, The Queen's soccer team. Please note that all names have been replaced with fictional names.

#### Group 1

March 7, 2017. 17:00-18:00

Participant	Age	Membership
Felicia	26	Since January 2016
Tove	27	Since March 2016
Nora	34	Since January 2016
Natalie	30	Since January 2016
Lise	31	Since January 2016

#### Group 2

March 14, 2017. 17:00-18:00

Participant	Age	Membership
Eva	25	Since February 2016
Malin	26	Since January 2016
Fanny	34	Since January 2016
Johanna	27	Since September 2016
Mikaela	26	Since January 2016

## 11.4 Interview transcription

Note that all names have been replaced with fictional names.

### 11.4.1 Group 1

March 7, 2017. 17:00-18:00

*Participants: Felicia, Tove, Nora, Natalie and Lise.*

**Info:** The interviews were audio taped and transcribed (below). Please note that minor breaks, coughs, laughs and sighs were not transcribed. Also note that Natalie was 30 minutes late.

#### Stage 1

**Jonna** (moderator): Jag skulle vilja se en konversation antingen i sms, messenger eller facebook eller nån annanstans där det kan ha uppkommit en emoji då och då.

**Lise:** Kan ha uppkommit...

**Felicia:** Det är väl bara att gå in på det första messet, haha

**Nora:** Vill man inte att det ska va lite ballare liksom...

**Jonna** (moderator): Det spelar ingen roll alls. Det behöver inte vara rebusar eller så, det behöver inte betyda nånting.

**Felicia:** Hahahaha

**Lise:** Det kanske inte betyder så mycket för dig...

**Tove:** Jag har.. inga sms [ohörbart]

**Jonna** (moderator): Alla behöver inte visa, vi kan bara ta någons exempel

**Felicia:** Hahaha, det är prestationsångest här känns det som. Alla bara letar och letar.

**Tove:** Ja men vad vill man visa liksom.

**Jonna** (moderator): så svårt kan det inte vara

**Nora:** Nä nä jag har alltså men...

**Tove:** Jag väljer det här meddelandet i Emoji grupp 1

**Jonna** (moderator): Ok vi tittat på det allihopa

**Nora:** Där pratar vi ifs om emojis, kanske inte det bästa exemplet...

**Jonna** (moderator): Nä sant

**Felicia:** Känns lite för lätt..

**Tove:** Ok vi hittar nån annan då

**Lise:** Jag har bara jätligt mycket såhär... hjärtan och diamanter och eld och så.

**Jonna** (moderator): Där har vi en bra. Vi lägger den i mitten om det känns ok att alla tittar på den.

**Nora:** Ok, här har vi en riktig emoji-lover.

**Felicia:** A gud ja.

**Jonna** (moderator): Vem är det?

**Lise:** Petra, min kompis.

[participants gather around message]

**Lise:** Hon skriver väldigt väldigt mycket emojis.

**Felicia:** Men det känns som att du också gör det faktiskt.

**Lise:** Ja men jag tänker att jag såhär. När hon skriver med jättemycket emojis så svarar jag med emojis också.

**Felicia:** mmm, klassiskt.

**Lise:** Men andra som inte... Jag tänker att hon skriver med emojis till typ alla. Men jag skriver absolut, tänker jag, bara till dem som skriver det till mig.

**Tove:** Mhm

**Lise:** Om det inte är såhär.. Hjärta, hjärta, ba, ba

**Felicia:** Mm!

**Jonna** (moderator): Är det inte du som skriver Emojis och andra som skriver det för att du skriver det?

**Lise:** Kanske ibland.

**Jonna** (moderator): Är hon känd för att skriva mycket emojis?

**Lise:** A, jag tror det. Nu brukar jag inte läsa andras meddelanden som hon skickar till dem men.

**Felicia:** Men man kan ju ofta se på Instagram och sånt om folk är såna som skriver många Emojis.

**Tove:** Ja just det.

**Lise:** Och där gör hon ju väldigt mycket emojis.

**Jonna** (moderator): Vad tror du/ni att de här betyder. Vad vill hon säga med dem här? Både vad de representerar och vad de..

**Felicia:** Alltså här känns det ju, men Kronan och High Five... Hjärtan, det ska lite så, delvis Queen. Och då ska den kronan representera det. Men också att det ska vara så lite peppigt och alltså symbolisera dig liksom bara "min queen" med massa energi med High Fiven och Diamanten.

3:57 **Lise:** Tänker du att det är en High Five? Är det en High Five?

**Felicia:** Eller sant...

**Lise:** Jag tänker att det är en sån "woooo!" [making church sound]

**Felicia:** Jaha! Va!

**Lise:** Ja jag vet inte...

**Nora:** Men har inte den liksom...

**Felicia:** Jag tänker att det är en sån "klapp!"

**Lise:** A kanske

**Tove:** Jag tror på den här.

**Nora:** Jag också.

**Felicia:** men det kanske det är. Om alla tror det så är det nog det. Jag har alltid tänkt att det är så "chkkkiki" [making the high five sound]

**Jonna** (moderator): Det ser lite olika ut i olika plattformar

**Nora:** Men typ som en shout out...

**Tove:** Ja.. "My queeeen!!!"

**Felicia:** [Confused] Okej!?

**Tove:** Men som förstärknings-liksom-symbol.

**Nora:** Exakt.

**Felicia:** Fast det blir lite samma grej.

**Jonna** (moderator): Förstärkning av vadå?

**Tove:** Ja förstärkning av peppen.

**Jonna** (moderator): Du sa energin innan Ada, lite samma grej

**Felicia:** Ja, precis

4:49 **Nora:** Ja men det förstärker det hon säger. Men det är ju egentligen samma sak som hon säger.

**Tove:** Jag tänker såhär. Om hon bara hade skrivit såhär "Dags å ta över världen min queen, punkt". Då hade det fått en helt annan innebörd. Det hade kunnat vara såhär "Nu kör vi, vi går upp på barrikaderna. Det är nu året är kommet". Alltså så liksom. Men det här är mer såhär "Nu kör vi min queen, woooo!" liksom, det är du och jag!

**Lise:** [ohörbart]

**Tove:** Ja precis, men det visar att det inte är så... Alltså det är ju seriöst. Hon menar ju det men det är inte, du kommer inte såhär "Hur ska vi göra det då".

Alla: Hehehe

**Lise:** "Har du en plan"

**Tove:** "Har du en plan, vi möts imorgon och så.. spånar vi på det..." mm.

**Felicia:** Men det blir också lite som, alltså. Man bara förklarar hur man menar det och i och med att man inte har. Det har man ju saknat mycket innan, man kan ju inte höra betoningar, man kan inte höra, typ så, hur någon säger det så att ironi kan vara jättesvårt att förstå och sådär. Men med emojis så blir det lite mer. Det är nästan så att man lägger in minspelet i.

**Tove:** Ja

**Felicia:** Man kan förstå lite mer Hur menar det här personen när den säger det. På vilket sätt säger den det.

**Jonna** (moderator): På vilket sätt skulle ni säga att den säger det

**Felicia:** Peppigt liksom

**Jonna** (moderator): Jomen, säg det typ.

**Lise:** jo men som Ada sa det innan. "Dags att ta över världen!"

**Tove:** "min queen!"

**Felicia:** "Whooh!!!"

**Tove:** Kanske en liten dans hade personen gjort. Den ba "Nu kör vi, 2017 fan" liksom så.

**Nora:** Men som den här skulle ju kunna va utan emojis egentligen, och så skulle den säga samma sak.

**Felicia:** mm

**Nora:** För det är ju också förstärkelse med tusen utropstecken. Men sen gör den då ändå nånting annat.

**Felicia:** Ja den hade funkade utan liksom

**Nora:** Fast det blir ändå någonting annat

**Felicia:** Lite mer kärlek.

**Tove:** Alltså jag kan inte hjälpa att det ser ut som en bajskorvar typ. Den där kronan.

**Tove:** Alltså så jag tänker såhär "hjärta, bajs" Alltså att det är lite så...

**Felicia:** Tramsigt

**Tove:** Ja precis. Hehe men det är bara min personliga tolkning.

**Lise:** Det här är ju också den senaste uppdateringen. Det tycker jag är ganska störigt.

**Tove:** Det är störigt! Man blir automatiskt påverkad. Det är inte så att man kolla på en emoji och börjar tolka "vad betyder den här, hur ska jag kunna liksom symbolisera den känslan, liksom, själv". Utan man ser ju den och så får man automatiskt en känsla.

**Felicia:** Exakt.

**Tove:** Och om det är liksom en krona som egentligen lite ser ut som en bajskorv, då är ju känslan kanske inte 100% positiv utan den blir en annan.

**Felicia:** Lite tvek.

**Tove:** Och sen när man börjar tänka "aha, det är en krona", då betyder det ju positivt. Men det är ju en sekundär analys.

**Jonna** (moderator): Men som att man tittar inte på en emoji som en emoji när den sammanfaller så, då det är känslan bara som man plockar upp? Men tittar inte på "hjärta, hjärta hjärta, krona, krona".

**Tove:** Nä, det är aldrig såhär "krona, aha, diamant vad betyder det, hjärta".

**Felicia:** Helhet. Ja håller verkligen med.

01:22 **Tove:** Och därför kanske det är viktigt att dem är, ger positiva konnotationer direkt man ser dem, alltså de som ska vara positiva.

[participants look at emojis. one more participant joined the group]

**Nora:** Här är liksom en emoji per mess typ. Här är den. Det betyder att det är snö kanske. Den där använder jag mycket. [ ]

**Tove:** Gör du!? Den har jag kanske aldrig använt.

**Natalie:** [looking at thumb up emoji ] Här är sån, när man bara inte hinner göra nåt.

**Felicia:** Ja jag tycker också att det är bra... [ohörbart]

**Tove:** Jag ser den som en diss. [participants laughing]

**Tove:** Det är min känsla när någon skickar en sån. För de inte ens har tid att skriva "okej", eller "det blir bra", eller "perfekt".

**Jonna** (moderator): Här är en massa smileys i slutet av meddelande, i mitten och i början. och lite tummen upp och så.

**Natalie:** Typ i varje

**Nora:** Det betyder såhär: "Nora ville ha följe till...", när vi skulle på den här fotbollsträningen, eller vad det nu var. Då ville hon gå dit och tycker jag att det är helt sjukt och då lägger jag in en sån här emoji [ ] som skrattar jätte jättemycket.

**Jonna** (moderator): För att det är sjukt?

**Nora:** För att det kanske skulle ta en timme att gå dit.

**Felicia:** Men och att en har såna v:n inåt, det gör att den blir så "ough!"

**Tove:** Den är inte bara glad, den är också chockad liksom

**Felicia:** Den är liksom så "är du sjuk i huvudet" säger den ju.

**Nora:** Mm, den är "är du sjuk i huvudet"

**Natalie:** Jag kan tycka att den är lite så larvig också.

**Lise:** hihhi

**Natalie:** Om man har gjort en tabbe liksom "aghhh" [ ]

**Felicia:** Just det

**Natalie:** För jag har tänkt på att det finns ingen sån som slår sig i pannan.

**Felicia:** Ja

**Nora:** Ahha

**Natalie:** Den har jag velat ha nångång när man typ so "doh!" har gjort nåt klantigt.

**Felicia:** Sant! Det har du nog rätt i.

[back to discussing the - emoji]

**Felicia:** Men den är lite så "vafan". Eller? Jag vet inte.

**Jonna** (moderator): Vad vill ni göra med de här smileysarna?

**Natalie:** De förstärker känslor. Jag kan t.o.m hamna så att jag skriver den... och sen, "nä nu var det för hårt"

**Nora:** Exakt

**Natalie:** Jag måste såhär komplettera med en smiley som lättar på stämningen. Det kan man ju bli helt knäpp av.

02:46 **Nora:** Det tycker jag händer mig i nästan varenda mess jag skriver.

**Natalie:** då blir jag såhär "nä jag ska inte använda några jävla smileys, det måste räcka med mina ord"

**Jonna** (moderator): På tal om det. Ser ni mönster i när ni använder smileys och inte använder smileys? T.ex. personer eller vad ni skriver.

**Lise:** Men såhär, om man vill vara ironisk eller så. Men det kanske inte framgår helt av bara texten eller så.

**Natalie:** Om jag ska skriva till någon äldre så använder jag inte så mycket smileys. Jag tycker också att man kan märka om man skriver till någon som aldrig skickar smileys, så kan det såhär. De är tontiga helt plötsligt.

**Nora:** Jag tänker på det, för jag är en sån person som alltid gör utropstecken vilket jag stör mig väldigt mycket på att jag gör och tänker att jag inte borde göra det.

**Lise:** Jag gör också det skitmycket

**Tove:** Jag gör också det supermycket

**Felicia:** Mm, jag med

**Nora:** och då tycker jag att det är lite samma sak som en smiley, jag skriver ett mess, precis som du säger, "oh det här kanske inte låter så trevligt", ja men lite så "artigt", så kommer det en puss eller glad..

**Tove:** Den "ooohh!"

**Natalie:** En glad söt med liten mun, hihi.

**Jonna (moderator):** Menar du att smiley på ett sätt ersätter utropstecknet?

**Nora:** Mm, ja nä men det ger lite samma effekt liksom. Men med emoji kan du göra på olika sätt för de ser olika ut. Ett utropstecken är ju bara ett utropstecken.

**Natalie:** Jag älskar ju den här, tjejen som gör så "shoo" [ ]

**Tove:** Som dansar?

**Natalie:** Ja, den tycker jag är såhär "utropstecken". Den är elegant, en är tuff, den är cool.  
[participants laughing kindly]

**Natalie:** Den är liksom utropstecken och tuff samtidigt.

**Tove:** Men vaddå skulle du skriva...

**Nora:** Men känner du att du kan lägga in den på allt?

**Natalie:** Nästan

**Nora:** Okej!

**Tove:** Men vaddå skulle du skriva såhär. "Vi ses i affären [ ]"

**Natalie:** Ja men då blir det såhär "Vi ses i affären!! Whoooo!!"  
(half shouting)  
[Laugh]

**Tove:** Ok, det är när du är extra peppig

04:55 **Natalie:** Jajaja, den är pepp liksom. jag använder den jättemycket.

**Nora:** Ja, men det är det, för den skulle jag bara använda om det var nån sån faktiskt dansar liksom. "Ska vi gå och dansa – dans".

**Natalie:** Nä nä för mig är den så "Whoo" typ, pepp.

## Stage 2

**Jonna (moderator):** Vad vill hon säga, vad vill hon få med med smileysarna här?

**Lise:** Att hon är glad, eller så, förstärka det hon säger precis innan.

**Nora:** Det känns som att hon är lite rädd att ingen kommer komma.

**Tove:** Det tänker jag också.

**Lise:** "Hehehehe" [worrying laugh]

**Natalie:** Ja, det är, ja exakt så. "Hehehe" [worrying laugh] känner jag också med den.

**Felicia:** Men gud det låter jättemyskt ju.

**Tove:** Om hon bara hade gjort en punkt så hade jag tänkt ännu mer att hon är rätt att ingen skulle komma. "Hoppas att så många som möjligt kan komma..." Jag tänker att hon skriver den för att visa att det inte är så farligt... hon är pepp liksom. hon är inte rädd.

[laugh in the room]

**Natalie:** Hon försöker balansera en typ såhär osäker mening.

**Tove:** Lauging [säger något ohörbart] som möjligt inte ska komma, hahaha.

**Natalie:** Hon försöker balansera något som kan framkomma och uppfattas som en osäker mening.

**Tove:** Ja precis

**Natalie:** A, genom att använda en glad [smiley]. Men den är lite mesig tycker jag.

01:30 **Felicia:** Ja, den är inte så kul.

**Natalie:** Jag brukar använda den som är sådär "hmm" för då är

det sådär, man göttar sig lite. Den..

**Tove:** Men där kanske danskvinnan hade passat in liksom.

01:54 **Lise:** Men också att det hade blivit annorlunda om hon hade skrivit såhär "det ska bli kul ikväll" lagt in den smiley där, och sen skrivit "hoppas att så många som möjligt kan komma". då hade det känts mer som att tyckte att det skulle bli kul på riktigt.

**Nora:** Exakt

**Felicia:** Mm

**Natalie:** Aha

**Nora:** För nu är det bara kul om så många som möjligt kommer.

**Felicia:** Ja, just det.

**Natalie:** Vilket hon inte är helt hundra på att det gör.

**Felicia:** Snygg analys

**Nora:** "Om ni inte har tänkt att komma så kanske ni borde skämmas lite just nu och kanske komma ändå"

**Jonna (moderator):** Placering har ju betydelse då.

**Tove:** Ja, precis.

**Lise:** Absolut.

**Jonna (moderator):** Vilket typ av situation är detta F2F? Du sa "detta är inte så ball det här"

**Felicia:** Hehe, men det var väl det vi pratade om. Det känns lite stelt och det känns lite osäkert, ehm, "det ska bli kul ikväll, hoppas så många som möjligt kan komma".

**Jonna (moderator):** Hur får det er att känna?

**Lise:** Man inte sugen på att gå.

**Tove:** Jag tror inte att det kommer bli så kul faktiskt.

**Felicia:** Jag stannar hemma.

**Natalie:** Alltså om hosten inte verkar tycka att det är så kul.

**Nora:** Men en sån jobbgrej, känns det typ.

**Felicia:** Jag tänker att det är kanske formuleringen också. Jag skulle aldrig skrivit "hoppas så många som möjligt kan komma". Då skulle jag skriva "fan vad kul det ska bli att se er".

**Jonna (moderator):** Men hur hade ni svarat på detta?

**Nora:** "Eh, tyvärr..." [laugh in the room] "jag har inga gymaskor och kan inte komma, smiley", eller ledsen..

**Lise:** Jag hade skrivit "jag har inga gymaskor", inte ens läst meningen.

**Jonna (moderator):** Är emojisarna viktiga i det här sammanhanget? Om vi t.ex. jämför med följande:

(switch to no emoji image)

**Tove:** Åh vad tråkigt det där kändes.

**Felicia:** Ja då hade man absolut inte kommit.

**Natalie:** Nu känns det lite stressat.

**Nora:** jag tycker att detta känns mer informativt. Det här kanske är en person på ett jobb som säger.

**Felicia:** Men det saknas ju ändå lite utropstecken.

**Natalie:** Nä men "det ska bli kul ikväll", komma what the fuck va.

**Tove:** Ja det tycker jag också är konstigt.

**Felicia:** Nä det är inte så konstigt.

**Tove:** Vaddå, "det ska bli kul ikväll – komma – hoppas så många..." alltså, ge lite credit att det ska bli kul ikväll liksom.

**Felicia:** Jag tycker att det kan va utropstecken efter "kan komma".

**Jonna (moderator):** Ni vill ändå ha någonting där verkar det som.

**Natalie:** Det är för platt.

**Felicia:** Annars känns det som att hon inte är ärlig med det hon säger.

**Tove:** Tror ni hon fiskar där? jag undrar om hon fiskar efter hur många som kommer komma. Folk kanske inte har 'attendat'.

**Jonna (moderator):** Ok om vi tittar på denna då.

(A lot of emojis)

**Felicia:** OH YEAH!!

[participants noise, whooo!]

**Lise:** Häst...

05:27 **Felicia:** Okej, jag hade kommit.

**Jonna** (moderator): Vad tror ni att den här personen försöker säga nu då?

**Nora:** Nu känns det som nåt slags knarkigt event.

**Lise:** Eller nån som ska spela på hästar.

**Natalie:** Det känns som att det är en självsäker person för hon använder de där coola glasögonen. Och häst är alltid coolt.

**Nora:** Vad är det där för nåt?

**Tove:** Champagneglas som skålar

**Nora:** Aha.

**Jonna** (moderator): Är häst alltid tufft?

**Natalie:** Men nån som står för att de gillar hästar, det är tufft.

**Nora:** Alltså jag tänker också att det kan vara Ketamin.

[Participant agreeing] "ahaa, jaa"

**Natalie:** Nämen Gud! Hahah!

**Nora:** Häst!

**Lise:** "Det blir en resa till Ketamin"

**Nora:** "Det ska bli kul ikväll, haha – häst"

**Jonna** (moderator): Men du sa "häst är alltid tufft kan inte du utveckla det lite.

**Natalie:** Jag vet inte. enhörningen är väl ännu bättre, den brukar jag använda.

**Felicia:** Häst är lite..

**Natalie:** Häst är snäppet under.

**Nora:** För mig, när det är en häst där så betyder det att man ska göra något som har med hästar att göra.

**Tove:** Exakt samma här.

**Natalie:** Va!! Näee.

01:10 **Nora:** Alltså trav eller..

**Tove:** Precis, de ska gå och rida och sen ska de gå ut och dricka champagne. Det låter skitkul.

**Nora:** Det är jättekonstigt att bara ha en häst tycker jag. Vad betyder det.

**Lise:** Eller menar hon "gnägg" som i "haha".

**Natalie:** Åh, jag har alltid massa såna.

**Lise:** Skratta...

**Nora:** Aha.

**Natalie:** Ihiii [horse sound/laugh sound]

**Jonna** (moderator): Tror ni att det här är avsändarens känslor?

**Natalie:** Det behöver det inte vara. Alltså det är känslorna som den vill förmedla. Jag har ju suttit ibland skit-såhär-trött och uttråkad och bara "whooh" och skicka världens bästa meddelande.

**Felicia:** Mmm!

**Jonna** (moderator): Varför gör du det, för att du vill förmedla det eller för att du vill...

**Natalie:** Det är det som ska förmedlas. Den andra ska uppfatta det så.

**Jonna** (moderator): Tänker ni också då?

[alla] Mmm.

**Natalie:** Det är ofta man skriver "hahaha" utan att skratta ut högt. Men det har hänt ju.

[All mumble, ohörbart]

**Nora:** Det är svårt att skriva det här och va allvarlig... Eller va ledsen liksom.

**Felicia:** Oh börja gråta... hahaha, jag brukar alltid gråta när jag skriver den crying-emoji.

**Jonna** (moderator): Har ni inte varit med om det nån gång att vi har varit ledsna men ändå skrivit femton laughing-emojis och...

**Natalie:** Jo!

**Tove:** Jag tror inte det.

**Lise:** Jag har nog inte.

**Jonna** (moderator): Men du hade gjort det Yami. Har du funderat på om det har gjort dig gladare för stunden?

**Natalie:** Åeh jag vet inte. Men kanske att. De känslorna finns ju ändå i en, så det kanske går att plocka fram. Men just nu är det ju inte lönt.

**Lise:** Men också att man kanske måste peppa andra för att bli peppad själv.

**Natalie:** Ja men det här är ju något som ska hända i framtiden. Då kommer hon ju förmodligen va mer peppad om hon inte är peppad när hon skriver det. Det har jag gjort, skrivit "fan vad fett vi ska ses ikväll!" men just nu så har jag jobbat hela dagen och vill bara gå hem och lägga mig och äta en macka".

**Nora:** Ja det är klart.

**Tove:** Men tror du inte att man blir peppad av att skriva. Alltså tänk hur alla vi reagerade när vi såg det här meddelandet. Alla började skrika "whooh!!". Alla blev så peppade, ba "nu kör vi liksom! Hit vill vi gå". Tror ni inte också man känner det när man skriver. På nåt sätt blir man ju påverkad ändå.

**Natalie:** Men jag tänker att man är inte deppig över den grejen man skriver om.

Anneli: Näe.

**Natalie:** Det är ju i såna fall om man är trött för man har jobbat eller hungrig men så är det ju nånting som händer som är kul. Så vet man att det kommer bli kul ändå.

**Tove:** Men bara att se det där medans man själv skriver det tror jag påverkar en själv på nåt sätt.

**Felicia:** Jag tänker också att det kan vara tvärtom alltså att man kan känna att "åh nej nu har jag skrivit alldeles för mycket, jag överdriver ju så jävla fake. Det är inte normalt att skriva så många hjärtan efter varandra." Och så kan man känna så "gud vad överdrivet" liksom.

**Natalie:** Man hetsar det ja.

**Nora:** [ohörbart]

**Felicia:** Njæ jag vet inte. Man får den där känslan av "gud vad överdrivet och vad falskt detta känns". Och det kan man också få när andra skriver, alltså när folk är lite för mycket att man bara så "chilla, det är inte så du hade sagt det ifall vi hade sett varandra". Det så kan bli liksom.

**Lise:** "Vaddå häst"

**Nora:** Jag tänker också att man hetsar varandra, som du sa innan om din kompis. Att du skriver mer till henne kanske. Om man då är i en tråd när folk börjar använda emojis så känns det som man bör kanske. Eller bara sugen på att göra det.

**Felicia:** Jag kände mig lite handikappad i denna tråden t.ex. att jag inte har kunnat svar med en emoji när vi faktiskt pratar om emojis.

**Natalie:** Va, man svarade direkt med bara emojis typ.

**Felicia:** Men jag har inte på min telefon.

**Natalie:** Jaha.

## Stage 3

**Jonna** (moderator): Hur tror ni att emojisarna påverkar... [scrolling through slowly]

**Felicia:** Gå upp igen. Den var ju döhärlig.

**Jonna** (moderator): Berätta varför den var döhärlig

**Felicia:** Därför att det var den sån eldig, passionerad puss, haha. Hon bara "puss puss" och så skitmycket glöd.. och ahhg!

**Natalie:** Diamant och explosion och sol och stjärnan och eld

**Felicia:** Kärlek.

**Natalie:** Hjärta.

**Felicia:** Passion känner jag när jag ser den. (post "liveuppdatera")

**Felicia:** Jättefin va den.

**Tove:** Som en superhjaltepuss typ.

**Jonna** (moderator): Vilken impact har den här på hur ni ser på



personen som skriver och hela innebörden.  
[scrolling through slowly]

**Jonna** (moderator): Hur ser ni på gruppen? Det här tillsammans med det här, och det här? Här har vi "måste plugga" och sen 5 st ledsna. Vad gör dem?

**Tove:** Folk älskar ju liksom fotbollen, alltså. Om man blir såhär ledsen för att man måste plugga en dag. Som här uppe [post "liveuppdatera"] man vill så gärna att resten av gruppen ska liveuppdatera.

**Nora:** Man vill visa i gruppen att man tycker så mycket om gruppen så att man förstärker varenda grej med, ja med fem ledsna.

**Tove:** Man tycker om det så mycket så man nästan storknar, man bara måste.

**Felicia:** Och man triggar varandra också. Om nån gör en emoji och så svarar man utan emojis så blir det kanske som att man själv inte är lika engagerad.

**Tove:** Mm

**Felicia:** Man vill visa sitt engagemang kanske och visa sin pepp.

**Natalie:** Jag ska säga då, dra den på andra kanten att det kan va så att just Queens är så himla öppet forum där man verkligen får lov att känna.

**Felicia:** Mm! Så sant.

**Natalie:** Så blir det såhär.. Det känns som att på riktigt alla tycker om fotbollen såhär mycket.

**Tove:** Jaja [ohörbart]

**Natalie:** Man märker det när man träffar folk också och då liksom sätter emoji på varandra såna här känslor liksom. Jag tänker att så många hade man inte använt i en vanlig uppdatering för då hade det blivit såhär "folk kommer tycka att jag är ett jävla flum" kanske. Men här är det såhär "ahhhh" ju mer ju bättre liksom för vi har sån tillåtande forum.

**Felicia:** Det har du nog rätt i.

**Lise:** Jo men i verkligheten också, på fotbollen är det också såhär.

**Nora:** Det är det jag också menar.

**Natalie:** Det är för att vi bara är brudar.

**Tove:** Å ingen är rädd för tycka om det för mycket liksom.

**Felicia:** Eller hur!

**Natalie:** Nå vi är inte alls dömande. Det är ingen som tänker "nu satte den där människan femton emojis, sjuk i huvudet". Det är ingen som säger så.

**Nora:** Men den här är också rolig för här är det ju en fotboll som börjar och sen ett långt meddelande så avslutas den med en fotboll. Så det är liksom nån slags estetik.

**Felicia:** Hahaha!!

**Natalie:** Inramat med fotboll.

**Felicia:** Hahahha!! Är det Erika?? Åh gud vad kul denna var. Men det är också sån informativ bara.

**Natalie:** Men alltså har ni fundera på det där skvätten? Jag älskar den.  
[discussion about what the emoji actually means. sweat? kiss? water? Not relevant].

**Felicia:** Men alltså det vi har gjort här. Jag vet att vi har använt fotbollar som upp-punktning, alltså rent praktiskt. Alltså helt från början när vi skrev, vem är vi.

**Natalie:** Jag tycker det är nice när man bara scollar snabbt så ser man såhär den där jävla bollen. Då vet man att det där måste jag läsa om man ska hänga med på...

**Jonna** (moderator): mhm.

**Felicia:** Listning liksom

**Natalie:** Har vi inte det nu längre? Det är därför jag inte har läst, hehe, "boring boring boring".

**Nora:** Här har vi den där kvinnan som dansar.

**Natalie:** Här har vi en delfin ☺ Tänker ni då såhär, att hon ska åka och bada med delfiner.

**Felicia:** Fast det är ju bad... "Bada nakenbad i soluppgången". Man kan ju se delfiner där i ribban.

**Jonna** (moderator): Hur hade det varit utan de här emojisarna?

**Natalie:** Då hade man använt mer bokstäver.

**Jonna** (moderator): Ni hade försökt på nåt sätt..

**Natalie:** Ja det hade vi nog gjort ja...

**Felicia:** Men jag tänker att denna hade funkar ganska bra utan emojis...

**Tove:** Jag tänker också det.

**Felicia:** I och med att är typ så. Det är stora bokstäver, hon är pepp lite nervös men övertygad om att detta kommer bli hur skoj som helst. Det är väldigt så.. Peppigt ändå. Det hade varit ganska förstärkt i sig liksom.

**Lise:** Men man hade behövt lägga in lite såhär utropstecken.

**Tove:** Beroende på, alltså man hade ju ändå läst, eller, varför skulle man behöva lägga in det tänker du?

**Lise:** "Alltså är 20e ett datum att längta efter" nanana.

**Felicia:** Ja, några utropstecken där men annars, alltså tänk här "mycket planering nu på sensommaren inför Somewhere. OBS: hur kul kommer vi ha?" Det är mycket peppa meningar som slinker in.

**Jonna** (moderator): Ja men den meningen utan emojin då, "Hur kul kommer vi ha".

**Felicia:** Ja där behövs några utropstecken.

**Tove:** Fast där är två frågetecken så man fattar att det inte är en riktigt fråga.

**Felicia:** Men där skulle gärna vara några utropstecken.

**Natalie:** Där skulle varit frågetecken, utropstecken, frågetecken, utropstecken...

**Felicia:** Absolut

**Jonna** (moderator): Händer det att ni väljer device utifrån emoji-tillgänglighet?

**Nora:** Alltså ibland sitter jag hemma och så ska jag skriva ett meddelande på PRESINDETA-sidan och så blir jag så himla störd för att jag sitter vid min dator.

**Natalie:** Ja men du det händer mig också. Ja men vill ha emojisen ju!

**Nora:** Ja exakt.

**Natalie:** Så finns det bara såna stora skitfula.

**Nora:** Men nu har jag lärt mig hur man gör.

[talking about how to insert emoji on mac, participants happy to learn about it]

**Nora:** Men tidigare har jag på riktigt tagit upp telefonen.

**Felicia:** Tror ni att det är skillnad när man pratar tjejer eller killar? Det känns som att eftersom vi är ett tjejlag. Vi gillar emojis allihopa och att vi förstärker varandra i det. Eller att vi hade använt lika mycket Emojis om det hade varit killar med i laget.

**Natalie:** Det var det jag var inne på. Eller alltså jag tror.

**Felicia:** Hur är ni med era killkompisar och sådär. Skriver ni lika mycket Emojis till dem? Eller skriver dem lika mycket Emojis som era andra kompisar? Finns det nån skillnad?

**Lise:** Jag tänker att det är så. Här är det så himla mycket pepp liksom och så blir det mycket lättare att använda sig av emojis förstärker den peppen liksom.

**Natalie:** Men också tillåtande pepp

**Felicia:** Ja

**Natalie:** Det är ingen som skulle döma någon annan för nånting som de skrev. Och det tror jag att alla känner. Och då kan man gå loss som man vill. f

**Jonna** (moderator): Känna som man vill och uttrycka det hut mycket man vill.

**Natalie:** Ja men precis, exakt. Är man i ett forum där man inte [ohörbart] okej då måste jag hålla tillbaka.

**Felicia:** Mm! Det är sant

**Natalie:** Och det behöver vi inte göra här. Och det kan, tror jag, bero på att vi är bara tjejer.

–END OF INTERVIEW–

## 11.4.2 Group 2

March 14, 2017. 17:00-18:00

*Participants: Eva, Malin, Fanny, Johanna, Mikaela.*

**Info:** The interviews were audio taped and transcribed (below). Please note that minor breaks, coughs, laughs and sighs were not transcribed. Also note that Fanny was 20 minutes late.

### Stage 1

**Jonna** (moderator): Skrolla igenom telefonerna och notera om ni ser emojis.

**Johanna:** Alla olika kommunikationsforum?

**Jonna** (moderator): Notera var de finns. Säg till om ni hittar meddelande som ni kan tänka er att visa (participants giggling while scrolling through phones)

**Mikaela:** Ja, min chef, ehm. "Härligt att det verkade så lyckat igår, skrev han med emojin på pommies [ 🍌 ]

**Jonna** (moderator): Känns det ok att visa?

**Mikaela:** Och så svarade jag "blablabla" och så bomben [ 🍌 ]. Det är liksom mycket emojis. [läser] "Jag är inte det minsta förvånad, coola gubben [emoji]. Här kommer en massa hjärtan här nere... Coola gubben... Stjärna... "we rule the park", hjärta... Mycket den här starka armen [ 🍌 ] kör vi.

**Jonna** (moderator): Men t.ex. den då...

**Mikaela:** [ohörbart]-rapport såhär halvvägs in på kvällen, visar då att kassan gick bra liksom. Så är det smileyn med blinkande utsträckande tunga [ 🍌 ] och den armen och bomben igen. Och så svarar han lite längre ner med alla hjärtan som finns i olika färger, "hälsa gänget". Så svarar jag "ska jag, bomben, [ohärbart], och hjärta. Hihi.

**Jonna** (moderator): Men om vi stannar där lite. Vad tänker du/ni att dem representerar?

**Malin:** Power

**Mikaela:** Ja men det ger liksom extra kraft lite. Det hade varit så tråkigt utan...

**Eva:** Det bekräftar ju på nåt sätt nåt slags känslouttryck

**Mikaela:** Ja...

**Eva:** Jag tänker att det är ganska lätt med emojis att

**Malin:** Typ så "Bra!"

**Eva:** ... få ut känsla.

**Mikaela:** Att säga lite mer liksom

**Malin:** Mm

**Mikaela:** Såhär som den armen [ 🍌 ] liksom, "vi är starka, vi kämpar på" typ.

**Johanna:** Ja, eller såhär, en bild säger mer än tusen ord.

**Mikaela:** Ja!

**Johanna:** Vi hade inte kunnat uttrycka det såhär "fan vad bra jobbat, ni är liksom bäst, kötta", men du kan inte skriva allt det där för då låter det bara jättekonstigt.

**Malin:** och det räcker ju typ med att skriva "gött" typ, så blir det ju samma sak.

**Jonna** (moderator): som att?

**Malin:** Nä men som hela det här, "gud vad bra..." Asså man behöver inte skriva så mycket för den här lilla emojin talar ju för det.

**Jonna** (moderator): Vad hade ni gjort utan emojin? Hade ni förstärkt på annat sätt?

**Eva:** Mycket utropstecken.

**Mikaela:** Ja!

**Malin:** Ja jag använder skitmycket utropstecken.

**Mikaela:** Ja jag med

**Malin:** Jätte, jättemycket.

**Mikaela:** Ja...

**Malin:** Om jag inte gör emojis så gör jag nog utropstecken väldigt mycket. ja.

**Eva:** Eller många frågetecken.

**Mikaela:** Ja jag gör sällan bara ett utropstecken. Isåfall är det två minst. För att förstärka liksom.

**Jonna** (moderator): utropstecken och frågetecken?

**Malin:** Nä antingen det ena eller det andra.. och isåfall en sån där lite obetydlig emoji och där är mycket utropstecken och frågetecken

**Mikaela:** Mm

**Johanna:** Ja på nåt sätt så signalerar det att man är peppig typ och inte. Om man bara har ett utropstecken så känns det torrt typ eller så, lite för seriöst..

**Malin:** Alltså ett betyder ju typ inget tycker jag.

**Johanna:** Näe, det är typ töntigt.

[laughing]

**Malin:** Mm, lite [ohörbart] kanske...

**Mikaela:** Det beror på sammanhanget liksom.

**Johanna:** Aa

**Jonna** (moderator): Ser ni ett mönster i när ni skickar emojis och när ni tar emot dem jämför när ni inte skickar eller tar emot dem?

**Mikaela:** Ja, alltså bladdrar man lite här i samma sms-tråd med min chef så är där ju platser där vi inte har det också, att det bara är text och då är det mer, såhär, kassaproblem eller att nånting såhär "oj nu är det trasigt, vi behöver fixa det". Väldigt såhär, sakliga grejer som kanske är mer jobb. Och så är det mer emojis när det är, såhär, pepp. "Fan vad bra kämpat, fan vad bra jobbat, såhär funkade det idag" blabla "hjärta, hjärta, hjärta", liksom, under service kanske.

**Jonna** (moderator): Så det är på jobbet också men i andra samma

**Mikaela:** och den då när det är mer sakligt, eller när det faktiskt är något konkret, något lite viktigare och så... Så inga.

**Eva:** Jag skulle aldrig skicka emojis om jag var sur på någon.

**Malin:** Näe!

**Eva:** Eller irrite... Eller om jag har...

**Malin:** Man gör ju aldrig den där arga emojin seriöst. [others agree]

**Malin:** Det gör man inte, "jag är sur på dig" [making the angry face]

**Eva:** Det är väl mer i lättsamma sammanhang.

**Jonna** (moderator): Har vi fler exempel på meddelande?

**Malin:** Jag har med min pappa, och där är det jävlar i det emojis.

**Jonna** (moderator): Vill du visa?

**Malin:** Ja, det kan jag göra. Titta på allt liksom. Alltså han är väldigt mycket för emojis. T.o.m. "Nu har jag fixat ett handtag till dig", till mitt kök liksom.

**Jonna** (moderator): Då blir det tummen upp och klapp [ 🍌 & 🍌 ]

**Malin:** Jag vet inte, jag tänker ju att det är någon som ber. Men han tänker nog att det är en high five.

[watching various messages with plenty of emojis, for example 🍌



□ and many others not specifically relevant to what is in the text message]

**Jonna** (moderator): Vad vill hon uttrycka med dem här?

**Malin:** Jag tror bara att han är glad. T.o.m. när han hämtar mig med bilen så skriver han "på" och sen en bil [ □ ] istället för "påväg". Då menar han "i bilen påväg till dig" typ. Jag tror bara att han tycker det är roligt, att han har upptäckt det ganska nyligen.

**Johanna:** Alltså äldre, våra föräldrars generation som liksom, teknik och sånt, även om det inte är nytt egentligen så är det fortfarande lite nytt. Det är inte så viktigt för dem. Nä men det finns inte samma sociala regler för hur de använder emojis utan de bara går loss, ehm, medans om jag skulle skriva så mycket emojis till mina vänner så hade de trott att jag var sinnessjuk typ, eller så här "vad håller du på med, men du kan ju använda ord också".

**Fanny:** Jag har tåmfen börjat använda emojis mer och mer. Nu blir jag nästan sur när jag måste skriva saker med ord. Och jag kan också märka att jag blir lite sur när jag vill skicka en emoji och inte hittar den, som [ohörbart] t.ex.

**Malin:** Men det är ju praktiskt, för när man skriver ord så kommer ju emoji:n också upp.

**Mikaela:** Va?

**Fanny:** Emjis är nåt som jag först tyckte var "jag kommer inte bli en sån som skickar smileys" vad det jag först tänkte för några år sedan, "fy vad töntigt" så jag var liksom i anti-smiley-gänget. Det var då det fanns två stycken. Sen har dem mer och mer börjat ta över mitt liv och senast igår var det en situation då jag smsade med en kompis, och hon skrev nånting och skickade massa såna här glada, men så var det också en med en sån här tår i [ □ ]. Hon hade slintigt på knapparna – jag direkt – "Helene är du ledsen?" Jag kände "onaj!", hon bara "Naj, jag tryckte fel".

**Jonna** (moderator) Kan ni känna att det bli missförstånd med emojis?

**Malin:** Näe inte alls...

**Mikaela:** Jag tar dem inte på så stort allvar. Nu fattar jag inte bara.

**Malin:** Alltså såna där bilder, typ kaktusar eller whatever, det är ju kanske inte betyder nåt utan de är bara fina, men mer dem här min-gubbarna är de som talar om ens känslor liksom.

**Johanna:** Snarare tvärtom, att de är förtydligande vad det är för sinnesstämning på det man ska kommunicera.

**Malin:** Ja skriver ofta ledsna gubbar när jag är glad.

**Eva:** Ja!

**Jonna** (moderator): Varför det?

**Malin:** För jag tycker att den är ganska ful där den skrattar och gråter [ □ ]. Jag skickar ofta snap chats t.ex. och då skiver jag ofta emojisarna som jättegråtiga gubbar när jag filmar mina djur för att de är så söta, t.ex.

**Eva:** Exakt!

**Malin:** Och det betyder inte att jag är ledsen utan det är bara att de är så söta.

**Fanny:** Skicka inte såna till mig E., då blir jag direkt nervös.

**Jonna** (moderator): Vad hade du för exempel?

**Eva:** Nämen, min pv skrev en lapp och la på min säng när jag redan hade gått, så hittade jag den när jag kom hem på kvällen, och då tog jag en bild på lappen och skickade till honom och gjorde den gråtiga [ □ ]

**Fanny:** Grät du på riktigt?

**Eva:** Näe.

**Fanny:** Men känslan var..?

**Eva:** Känslan var så.

**Malin:** Det behöver inte vara gråt som i ledsen, utan bara fint. Det är ofta jag använder den så.

**Eva:** Och med ett hjärta.

**Fanny:** Men ni pratar ni om de där två forsarna [ □ ]. Min kompis som hade slintigt, det var den där med en [ □ ] den är 'pure sadness'.

**Malin:** Nä jag har aldrig tolkat den så, för jag tror inte att om någon hade varit ledsen på riktigt då hade man inte skrivit en

emoji för att liksom.

**Eva:** Ja men det var som vi sa att om man är förbannad på någon så skriver jag ju inte arga gubbar.

**Malin:** Nä men exakt.

**Fanny:** Men vänta du och jag **Malin:** pratar inte riktigt samma Emojispråk

**Malin:** Nä det gör vi inte.

**Mikaela:** Men tolkade din pojkvän det som att du var ledsen då? Eller att... [ohörbart]

**Eva:** Näe för det var ju kombinationen med hjärta.

**Jonna** (moderator): Just det, kombinationen.

**Eva:** Och då var det ju det här att man ska, ehm man vill ju att det ska se snyggt ut också. Jag kan ju inte bara skicka en som gråter utan jag måste: först ett hjärta, sen en gråtande, sen ett hjärta och en en gråtande igen.

**Jonna** (moderator): Symmetri...

**Malin:** Jaa

**Fanny:** Jag kör mycket emojis som en board.

**Malin:** Ja, jag gör också det. Jag kan inte göra en oftast, utan jag måste göra tre i rad av samma, antingen gör jag en av samma eller tre. En eller tre.

**Fanny:** Och det är, definitivt måste jag säga, kanske den sista, dem har jag blivit mycket fler på telefonerna. Man blir ju helt liksom lycklig när det var den senaste programuppdateringen och det hade kommit nya.

**Mikaela:** Unicorn!!

**Fanny:** Ja exakt, man bara, nu talar dem till oss på riktigt... Jo men vad var det jag skulle säga... De sista två åren är det något som har letat sig in i ett liv väldigt mycket, som i ett meddelande t.ex. vad du ser när det är bara en massa text, dem sticker ju ut, ba, "jag kan ju inte skicka två likadana smileys". Då kan jag gå in och ändra ett i ett perfekt meddelande, så här, jag måste ju variera smileyn.

**Jonna** (moderator): Ja som din pappa hade gjort där [E:] han skickade olika huvuden där.

**Malin:** Hm, men jag tycker att min pappa är random, alltså han bara trycker på nåt som han inte har nån aning om...

**Fanny:** Mina föräldrar har inte lärt sig emojis än.

**Malin:** Medans en själv kanske har mer genomtänkt i sitt användande. Jag iaf.

**Eva:** Jag har också skickat, liksom, rebusar... I raggsyfte och sånt.

**Malin:** Jaja

**Fanny:** Pop the cherry...

**Malin:** Rita bilder med emojis är också kul.

**Fanny:** Kan jag berätta att jag skrev, när jag hade blivit av med tjejoskulden.

**Eva:** När man raggar på nån.

[sorl, ohörbart]

**Jonna** (moderator): T.ex. vaddå?

**Mikaela:** [ohörbart]... rebusen då?

**Eva:** Amen då är det väldigt mycket så [ohörbart] och jag då, och den här andra personen, den finns ju mycket gubbar, och så har man ett plus där. Och den går dem... till en park och så har man ett träd-emoji och en ö. Ja men ni fattar.

**Mikaela:** Alltså jag lär mig så mycket.

**Fanny:** Jag kan berätta en, Britta skickade när det var tal om en man med riktigt stor snopp. Då ritade hon en persika med en näsa och det såg fan ut som en gigantisk kuk. Så man kan vara väldigt kreativ. Så det är bara fantasin som sätter gränser.

## Stage 2

**Jonna** (moderator): Nu ska vi gå till nästa del. Ni ska få titta på lite meddelande som jag har satt ihop själv. Här har vi Katarina Berg.  
[reflecting quietly]

**Fanny:** Jag hade inte sagt punkt innan hjärta kan jag känna rakt av.

**Malin:** Inte jag heller

**Mikaela:** Hehehe

**Fanny:** Det är liksom så,

**Malin:** Ja hon menar nog emoji:n som en punkt där.

**Mikaela:** Ja emoji:n är nog som en punkt, skulle precis säga det.

**Fanny:** Man sätter punkt med lite kärlek.

**Jonna (moderator):** Vad tror ni att personen vill säga här då?

**Fanny:** Med emojisarna?

**Malin:** Att den är glad och kärleksfull...

**Mikaela:** Mm

**Fanny:** Hon är taggad på festen, eller vad det nu är.

**Eva:** Om hon inte hade haft ett hjärta, då hade det inte varit lika mycket [ohörbart]...

**Fanny:** Lite torrare utan hjärtat.

**Malin:** Det känns som att det är något som hon bjuder in till.

**Jonna (moderator):** Har hade det låtit utan emojis?

**Johanna:** Då hade hon fått lägga till såhär "skulle uppskatta jättemycket om någon snälla, snälla, skulle behöva ett par sandaler. Det vore jättesnällt". Alltså, lägga på lite extra snälla ord.

**Fanny:** Mm, det är ju att förkorta det skriftliga språket.

**Eva:** Om hon inte hade haft emojisarna så hade jag tyckt att Katarina Berg var en torr person.

**Malin:** Ah jag med

**Fanny:** A, torr är exakt vad jag känner

**Malin:** Jag tycker också att det är torra val av emojis iofs men.

**Fanny:** Jag hade inte velat komma på den festen och hon hade inte fått sandaler av mig.

**Eva:** Hon hade blivit bjuden på [ohörbart]-fest.

**Fanny:** Hehe, är detta en riktigt person?

**Jonna (moderator):** Näe. Haha, vi får inte säga detta till Katarina Berg.  
[laugh in the room]

**Fanny:** Hon får inte börja i fotbollslaget...

**Jonna (moderator):** Tror ni att de här emojisarna representerar det hon känner?

**Malin:** Ehm, näe

**Mikaela:** Jag tror att hon är lite mer nervös än glad, kanske. "Åh hoppas att det kommer många" och så lägger hon till den där glada för att då kanske fler vill komma, kankse.

**Johanna:** Kan man ana desperationen?

[laugh in the room]

**Fanny:** Katarina har inte jättebra självförtroende.

**Malin:** Alltså den emoji:n är ful som fan.

**Mikaela:** Den där första meningen kanske pratas lite i falsett. Men ja, nu dissekerar jag sällan såhär mycket men om man nu ska göra det.

**Jonna (moderator):** Ja det är ju det ni ska göra.

**Mikaela:** Ja då har den lite nervös ton.

**Malin:** Hon har antagligen många vänner som hon då bjuder in till något, grillfest eller nåt. Men de är inte så nära som antagligen vi är med våra vänner.

**Fanny:** Näe.

**Malin:** Sådär hade jag aldrig skrivit om jag hade bjudit mina vänner på fest någonsin. De är inte så nära.

**Eva:** Detta kanske är nån slags after work.

**Malin:** Hon vill inte visa sig själv för den hon egentligen är, det där är ingen person.

**Fanny:** Näe, hon är osäker.

**Mikaela:** Stackars Katarina.

**Jonna (moderator):** Hur får det här meddelandet er att känna. Hur svarar ni? Blir ni sugna på...

**Mikaela:** Näe.

**Johanna:** Det är också det här "hoppas att många kan komma", men hon behöver även hjälp för hon har inga egna sandaler. Det känns som att hon vill ha mycket. Eller...

**Malin:** Vad bistår hon med liksom, vad kommer hon med till det här?

**Jonna (moderator):** Tycker ni att emojisarna är viktiga i sammanhanget?

**Fanny:** Ja alltså hon får skriva lite roligare text.

**Malin:** Mm, lägga mer krut på det liksom.

**Jonna (moderator):** Om vi gör så då (changing image).

**Mikaela:** Gud vad tråkigt. Snark!

**Malin:** Ja, jag hade inte ens läst det. Alltså det hade jag inte.

**Fanny:** Nå det blir bara en grötig massa av ord.

**Johanna:** Men nu är det typ att de ska på en skogsutflykt eller vandring eller nånting istället för fest. Det är typ såhär, hon skriver i folkhögskola-gruppen.

**Malin:** En typ på konferens eller nåt, väldigt opersonligt är det nu.

**Jonna (moderator):** Det hade inte dykt upp i fotbollslagets feed..?

**Malin:** Nä

[all agree]

Jo. Hur hade ni svara på detta?

**Malin:** Jag hade inte skrivit nåt.

**Johanna:** "Ja, jag är precis i tid, och ja, du kan låna sandaler".

**Malin:** Inga sandaler till dig nä.. Hehe

[laugh]

(going back to previous image)

**Jonna (moderator):** Jag måste bara gå tillbaka till de här emojisarna igen. Jag frågade innan "är det såhär hon känner", och ni sa "nej". Så varför har hon dem?

**Eva:** Det känns som att hon använder dem mer för att övertyga.

**Fanny:** Mm, hon är osäker.

**Johanna:** Det kan också vara sammanhanget som hon skriver i, att det är såhär, olika slags relationer som hon har och så för att underlätta lite kommunikationen att folk ska förstå vilken sinnesstämning hon har och gör lite extra men samtidigt inte så att det blir oseriöst för att det är en del som är mottagare som inte är lika nära och som skulle uppfatta det som att hon var tramsig eller så typ. Så hon måste ligga på en lagom nivå.

**Malin:** Det är väldigt lagom ja.

**Jonna (moderator):** Ja ok om vi gör såhär då. (changing to third image).

**Mikaela:** Yes!! Nu snackar vi.

**Malin:** Ska de rida?

**Fanny:** Oj, nu känns det som en raver.

**Jonna (moderator):** Vad försöker hon säga?

**Malin:** Nu jävlar...

**Mikaela:** Nu är det ju fest och inte konferens

**Malin:** Its going down.

**Fanny:** Raver.

**Malin:** Nä, inte raver.

**Fanny:** Jo, brillorna och häst.

**Mikaela:** Jo hästen [ ] kan vara ketamin.

[laughing]

**Fanny:** Bubbel [ ]

**Jonna (moderator):** Vilken typ av situation är det här i F2F?

**Fanny:** Man blir ju mer taggad på att gå på den här festen.

**Eva:** Ja

**Mikaela:** A, nu är det ju fest helt plötsligt.

**Fanny:** A, och hon bara "uöhh, uh, uahh!"

[laughing]

**Malin:** Man blir sugen faktiskt.

**Fanny:** Jag fick lite mer personlighet på henne.

**Eva:** Mm, hon känns som en mer öppensinnad person.

**Fanny:** Mm, och busig.

A. Och det gillar jag.

**Malin:** Man vill hellre gå dit nu.

s: man hade kanske t.o.m. lånat ut ett par sandaler.

**Malin:** Jaja, jag hade gjort det.

**Jonna** (moderator): haha vilken vändning.

**Malin:** Ja men det är så. Det blir trevligare att läsa det bara genom att titta på det, jag känner ofta så när jag läser saker, alltså inte direktmeddelande, men när man scrollar i ett feed. Alltså skit där det inte, alltså är där inte en emoji eller är det liksom inget som fångar ett intresse då läser jag väldigt sällan det, om det bara är personer liksom. Om det bara är ett namn och en text så är det inte intressant. Det här fångar ju min uppmärksamhet, det är ju nånting som händer här, hon hade ju inte brett på med de här emojisarna om det inte var nånting som hände.

**Jonna** (moderator): Men tror ni att det är de här känslorna hon sitter med när hon skriver?

**Malin:** Mer, nä men inne i sig kanske.

**Eva:** Det känns ju som att on är peppad liksom.

**Fanny:** Mm

**Johanna:** Mm, alltså både och, hade detta varit en närmare vän, typ i en privat grupp eller en privat chatt, då hade jag tyckt att det här var, liksom, det man skulle förvänta sig, men hade jag sett det här i facebook-feeden typ så hade jag tyckt att det här verkar vara nån som var lite väl over-the-top typ. Men jag är också lite, fortfarande, emoji anti.

**Jonna** (moderator): Mhm.

**Malin:** Det har jag faktiskt märkt. Nu när du säger det.

**Jonna** (moderator): Kan du utveckla det?

**Johanna:** Jag har inte använt det så mycket, ehm, precis som du har varit anti när det börjades med emojis, lite såhär, gammal gubbe "man ska kunna uttrycka sig i ord", liksom "du har lärt dig språket, du ska kunna uttrycka dig i skrift" vilket ju, jag tycker är viktigt också.

**Fanny:** Jag tyckte också innan då att, då när jag också var den här gamla gubben, så tyckte jag att smileys var väldigt barnsligt. Jag tyckte inte att det passade sig för en kvinna i min ålder.

**Jonna** (moderator): När vände det?

**Fanny:** Jag vet inte...

**Malin:** Men alltså fanns det inte när ni var unga, haha, tänkte jag säga. Men jag var fan uppväxt med sånt, alltså, emojis.

**Fanny:** Jo men det fanns ju men det var ju glad gubbe..

**Mikaela:** Det var ju kolon och parantes [ : ) ]

**Fanny:** Flirt-gubbe

**Mikaela:** MSN...

**Malin:** MSN!

**Fanny:** Ah, precis. Dem där.

**Malin:** Ah, men de gubbarna är...

**Fanny:** Teckengubbarna

**Malin:** Men de blev ju också såna sen.

**Mikaela:** Ja, de här änglarna... A inom parantes...

**Eva:** Men det blev de ju bara på MSN. Så fick man använda dem andra...

**Malin:** Hahaha.

[participants discussing what shortcuts led to what emojis on msn, not relevant].

**Fanny:** Men lite skulle jag vilja säga att det är en åldersskillnad här på flera år. Faktiskt, det gör skillnad.

**Malin:** Men sen kan jag säga det fanns ju fortfarande gubbar back then, alltså man valde ju sin emoji. Så var det för oss iaf, alltså man hade sin, såhär, signatureemoji.

**Fanny:** Vilken var din?

**Malin:** Eh, jag hade håret, det coola gubben och jag kommer ihåg att jag tyckte alla de som använde den var liksom lame as fuck.

[lol in the room]

**Jonna** (moderator): Lame as fuck... Hehe, men kan ni känna idag också att ni har signatureemojis?

**Malin:** A...

**Eva:** Ja

**Mikaela:** Definitivt.

**Johanna:** Är det inte fortfarande lite att blink-emojin är lite så, idiotsignatur.

**Malin:** Ja, den är förlegad.

**Jonna** (moderator): Jaså!?

**Fanny:** Haha, det är min favorit.

**Jonna** (moderator): Men du Johanna som fortfarande är lite anti, finns det nån som du känner såhär, "den här kan jag stå för" och som du slänger in ibland.

**Johanna:** Den som jag använder oftast, det är den som ser, såhär, väldigt glad och blundar samtidigt. [ ☺ ], i mycket konversationer med människor som jag inte känner så väl liksom i jobbet framför allt, och då när man inte riktigt känner personen och försäkra att det är god stämning mellan oss så lägger jag in den för att såhär "jag är glad och positiv" det är liksom... Just för att, amen det känns som att nuförtiden då använder du alltid emojis när du skickar, liksom, chattmeddelanden eller sms, och gör du inte det, då är det som att du är sur.

**Malin:** Mm.

**Jonna** (moderator): Har ni andra en sån emoji som ni känner er bekväma med att använda ofta, som det brukar bli liksom.

**Eva:** Den som sträcker ut tungan [ ☺ ].

**Mikaela:** Den som har tungan rakt fram.

A. Ja...

**Fanny:** Inte den som var lame as fuck...? Nä för den som var 'lame as fuck' det var...

**Mikaela:** Blinket och tungan...

**Eva:** Den här [ ☺ ].

**Malin:** Ja det är verkligen en [ohörbart]-emoji.

**Fanny:** Ja men...

**Malin:** Jag har ganska många, jag använder dem ofta i ganska så ironiska syften.

**Fanny:** Vad säger ni, jag blev så otroligt lycklig, det är ju ganska nyligen ändå när man bara skickar tre stycken och de blir jävligt stora, wow vilken utveckling. [participant talking about the great new feature which can make emojis bigger, not relevant].

**Malin:** Det här är mina bästa som jag använder oftast. Someone: Uh!! [surprising voice]

**Mikaela:** Det här är mina tre bästa tror jag.

**Fanny:** Ja just det, apan [ ☺ ] det har jag frågat dig nån gång, "vad betyder det", för jag missförstod det helt.

**Malin:** Det är för de... [ohörbart] ... tycker de ser löjligen ut.

**Mikaela:** Den är lite såhär, fnissande tänker jag att den är.

**Eva:** Har du en ny uppdatering?

[While changing for the next part of the interview, participants continue talking about the different emojis available in the latest update, talking about which ones they like to use and giggle].

**Eva:** Min bästa är också tungan [ ☺ ] och skvättet efter [ ☺ ]

**Malin:** Ja, skvättet. Elden [ ☺ ] är också riktigt bra.

**Mikaela:** Alltså wow, excuse me. Kolla [reflecting on something she's looking at on screen] .

## Stage 3

**Jonna** (moderator): ska vi gå till sista delen. Nu går vi in i det som vi har gemensamt. Ni är utvalda för att ni är med i Queens. Vi ska titta på några meddelanden.

**Fanny:** A det är jänkla mycket vi skickar där. Det är mycket emojis på våran sida.

**Jonna** (moderator): )Precis, på vår sida. Är det mycket så på andra ställen också eller upplever ni att det är vår sida som är så?

**Fanny:** Man kan ju säga att efter laget har haft match, då sprutar det ju hjärtan från alla håll och kanter. Hjärtat är ju den mest efter match. Mycket styrka, mycket proffs. Proffs är min förresten, ett svart proffs.

**Jonna (moderator):** Den är ju din.

**Fanny:** Den är min ja. Det är ett statement också, jag skickar bara svarta emojis  
[talking about if it is right or wrong to send black emojis, not relevant].

**Jonna (moderator):** Hur tror ni att meddelandena med emojis formar er upplevelse av meddelande i sig och i gruppen i stort? Här är smileys, fotbollar.

**Fanny:** Fotbollen ja. Proffs och fotboll, de är mina.

**Mikaela:** Där har hon ju gjort såhär "fotboll, hjärta, fotboll, hjärta, fotboll [□ □]. Det där är ju snyggt.

**Malin:** Det kan jag tyckte inte är så snyggt, jag hade hellre satt fotboll, två hjärtan, en fotboll alltså så att det blir lite mer... Alltså det där känns bara.

**Fanny:** Men man vill ju, det är störligt. Jag har ibland varit inne och editat när den har hamnat där uppe, byggt och och flyttat ner.

**Mikaela:** Ja, jag med.  
[ohörbart sorl]

**Fanny:** Jag har liksom inte rätt att klaga ... [ohörbart] ... tid i mitt liv.

**Malin:** Isåfall är det bättre att skippa den där första fotbollen känner jag. Det blir skönare att ha, det passar ihop när det är en för mycket.  
(scrolling down)

**Fanny:** Oj, det är [namn], där ser man, ett litet hjärta. Detta är Felicia, från matchen.

**Jonna (moderator):** Vad gör de här emojisarna för gruppen, hur påverkar de relationerna till varandra tror ni?

**Malin:** Mycket tror jag.

**Mikaela:** Absolut jättemycket

**Malin:** Jätte jättemycket.

**Eva:** Det skapar nån slags öppenhet.

**Mikaela:** Och vi-känsla.

**Eva:** Jag känner mig, om jag kommunicerar med en person, och jag kanske inte känner personen så väl, och personen använder emojis, då känner jag mig mer bekväm.

**Mikaela:** Jag med.

**Jonna (moderator):** Att det är många här gör att man själv känner sig bekväm.

**Malin:** Ja men det tyder absolut på en öppenhet, tycker jag. Man visar att man är mottaglig, alltså så, man, jag vet inte.

**Jonna (moderator):** Och här har vi ett meddelande...

**Eva:** Inga emojis där.

**Jonna (moderator):** När precis, där kanske texten klarar sig.

**Mikaela:** J det är ganska peppig text.

**Jonna (moderator):** Den här då, Fem ledsna gubbar. Vad gör dem för det meddelande. Hur viktiga är dem?

**Malin:** Jätteviktiga. Alltså.  
[others agree]

**Fanny:** det är inte bara en, det är bara inte bara lite bull, det är så jävla trist att personen i fråga "måste plugga".

**Jonna (moderator):** För man vill så gärna komma på fotbollen.

**Malin:** Mm...

**Fanny:** Ah. Men den under är lite mer försiktig. "Rackarns..."

**Jonna (moderator):** Hur skulle det vara om emojisarna här inte var med?

**Fanny:** [reads a post from slide] "skyndar lagom från jobbet" hehehe.

**Johanna:** [looking at a neutral post with just a few emojis] Men var det inte detta som utvecklades till att det bara blev några få som skulle vara med?

**Fanny:** Mm, det blev nog ingen träning den gången och här ser det ut typ som att de som blivit kvar i konversationen det är inte

såna som är jättetigha och då blir det mer såhär återhållsamt ba, en sansad gubbe, en sansad gubbe, "håll igång, det är god stämning"

**Fanny:** Hade det varit såhär fem stycken proffstecken, det hade ju peppat loss kanske den där som ba "ey men då skiter jag i det.

**Johanna:** Ah.

**Jonna (moderator):** Det här kanske rent av är Katarina Berg liksom.

**Malin:** Ja det är det nog.  
[Laughing]

**Jonna (moderator):** Så antalet emojis kan också spela roll.

**Fanny:** Mm.

**Mikaela:** Ja, skitbra [looking at messages on screen].

**Eva:** Jag gillar och sätta saker.

**Malin:** Mm, det är fint.

**Mikaela:** Det där tycker jag är snyggt också, fotbollen, hjärta, fotboll.

**Fanny:** Mm.

**Mikaela:** Jag hade satt hjärta och så fotboll [ohörbart, laugh].

**Jonna (moderator):** Och här är massa utropstecken också.

**Mikaela:** Men alltså jag tänker tillbaka mycket nu på när vi hade mycket [name of other organisation]-möten i början. Det kunde bli en väldigt barsk stämning för det var så mycket olika viljor och även i typ våran facebook grupp att det kom fram så argt, liksom, att jag hade liksom en punkt på nåt möte där jag bara såhär "kan vi inte bara slänga in en smiley eller ett hjärta så blir det trevligare" liksom, men då blev jag ratad där. Det var liksom en stor grej där. Jag tror att alla vi var lite sköra och det var lite nytt och läskigt och såhär. Lite som det är i typ oss, jag tror att om inte vi hade kört mycket smiley så hade det vart samma känsla som [organisation] att man inte hade vågat at platsen och man, såhär "jag vet inte om jag vågar komma på träningen för då är det väldigt så uh".

**Eva:** Stelt liksom...

**Mikaela:** Men nu är det liksom alla hjärtan, smileys och fotbollar gör liksom att man känner att man... trots att man kanske inte känner alla och det är såhär folk man knappt har träffat så vågar man ändå ta sig dig.

**Eva:** Det är avslappnat.

**Mikaela:** Det kan göra en stor grej för stämningen liksom.

**Jonna (moderator):** För att man har visat det är? (pointing at the screen)

**Fanny:** Man blir så stark!

**Mikaela:** Ja men folk är såhär glada, och kul och, såhär, alla är med och alla liksom ska med. Det är skithärligt liksom.

**Eva:** [pointing at screen, someone using just one emoji] Är den person så jävla peppande?

**Fanny:** Men det beror på vem det är. Alltså om det där t.e. hade varit Linnea så had det varit mycket för hon slösar inte med emojis. Och då hade detta varit ett stort steg. Då är man fanimej peppad.

**Johanna:** Men jag tycker skriver på en fredag morgon t.o.m. "vaknar med fotbollspepp" då är du det. Du skriver inte ut det om du inte är det.

**Fanny:** Näe.

**Johanna:** Orden betyder faktiskt det dem betyder.

**Fanny:** A precis, det är ingen tveksamhet ändå. Men "vaknar med fotbollspepp" är glad.

**Mikaela:** Men jag hade nog lagt till sju utropstecken kanske.

**Fanny:** Men tänkt då att det kanske är klockan 6:45.

**Mikaela:** "Vaknade med fotbollspepp, whoaa!" Det är individuellt liksom.

**Jonna (moderator):** Ser det ut såhär i andra grupper som ni är med i?

**Malin:** Jag är inte med i så många andra grupper...  
[laugh]

**Fanny:** Äh, jag har inte tid.



**Malin:** Men alltså jag tycker att det talar ganska mycket för alltså så, om man kommer in som helt ny nu när vi ändå har spelat så länge ihop som ett år, alla känner varandra lite grann liksom så tror jag att den här med alla emojis, den lättar upp stämningen liksom att man känner sig nog välkommen och bekväm och, vi verkar vara glada och härliga.

**Fanny:** [watching post on screen] Hahaha, "glitter bitch", var det så hon fick heta.

**Mikaela:** Yeah, hehe.

**Jonna (moderator):** Det tycker jag var intressant, ehm, nu ställer jag ledande frågor men jag vill plocka ut det du sa att, det är mycket emojis där och om man då kommer som ny så ser man dem då.

**Malin:** Alltså, jag vet med mig själv att typ i början när jag började typ spela mer än vad jag gjorde i början, då var jag ganska så, typ tyckte att det var jo... för jag har ganska svårt för att komma in i, såhär, nya sammanhang där jag inte känner så många. Jag tycker det är jättejobbigt. Och det var nog mycket på grund av att stämningen var så pepp i liksom gruppen, plus att Patricia kanske pushade mig till det liksom ba "det är nice", liksom, "du behöver inte va orolig för någonting", det var anledningen till att jag vågade.

**Mikaela:** Exakt samma här. Typ efter min jävla sjuka vinter liksom, så har jag känt att hade det inte varit så peppigt, så hade det varit lättare att "amen nu har jag ju inte tränat på så länge så ni skiter jag i det".

**Malin:** Mm!!

**Mikaela:** Alltså såhär, men nu är det en väldigt och kärleksfull facebook-grupp, så då blir det ju att man vill ju vara med i den stämningen liksom, att såhär, det är inte jobbig liksom att "nu har det kommit in en massa nya som jag inte känner och inte har träffat" ba "ahh, lite läskigt" liksom.

**Jonna (moderator):** Det tror jag också är, ni nämnde ju det innan att, "hade man sett det i ett flöde på fb så hade det varit overload, men att det är på något sätt är tillåtande här i gruppen och, tror ni att det överförs till fotbollsplanen? Tillåtande känslan.

**Johanna:** Verkligen. Men det är ju typ såhär...

**Jonna (moderator):** Det är ju känslor som uttrycks här.

**Johanna:** Ja det återspeglar ju den kärleksfulla, peppiga, kulturen som ändå är i laget och som gör att man känner sig väldigt trygg med att komma in som ny också. Men det är ju på båda hållen, dels att man har varit på en träning där det har varit jättebra stämning. Så kommer man hem och så är det direkt, haha, ett inlägg där någon älskar alla. Det är verkligen, det gör jättemycket. Sen så, det är ju också viktigt att alla, såhär, alla uttrycken som finns online, med både text och emojis, att de måste ju vara förankrat i verkligheten också.

**Jonna (moderator):** Nä just det. Hade det inte varit något av de på plan så hade de ju inte gjort nåt.

**Johanna:** Säg typ, tänk [name of other football team] om det hade sett ut så i deras grupp, de hade ju inte köpt det liksom.

**Malin:** Nä det är jävligt sant.

**Fanny:** Nä jag kan inte några se några lag som vi har mött.

**Jonna (moderator):** Jag måste int i deras facebook grupp och sen måste jag göra en jämförande analys.

**Eva:** Men det finns ju personer som inte har smartphones och sånt, jag vet inte om det finns någon i vårt lag. Men jag har kompisar som inte har det och som inte kan se emojis.

**Jonna (moderator):** Då får de små rutor bara?

**Mikaela:** Ja det blir de här små fyrkanterna.

**Eva:** För jag tänker, emojis är ju inte tillgängligt för alla liksom.

**Jonna (moderator):** Nä det var en bra poäng.

**Malin:** Men verkligen de flesta.

**Eva:** Jaja, men jag undrar de som kanske inte har.

**Jonna (moderator):** Man skulle fråga dem hur de känner.

**Malin:** Men de som inte har smartphones kan ju inte nå sån här

information från sin telefon.

**Eva:** Nänä.

**Malin:** Utan bara från datorer.

**Mikaela:** Ja de finns väl i messenger i datorn.

**Malin:** Alla finns ju inte.

**Mikaela:** Inte lika bra som i telefonen. Bara de här standardgubbarna typ.

**Eva:** Men med sms och sånt, det vore intressant att prata med dem som inte har.

**Jonna (moderator):** Verkligen. Särskilt de som är med i Queens. [scrolling through pdf].

**Jonna (moderator):** När ni ser sånt här, då läser ni inte "delfin", "jordgubbe", "glad", "dans".

**Malin:** Näe...

**Jonna (moderator):** Ni tittar på helheten...?

**Mikaela:** Men den är ju lite såhär, den säger ju typ "sommarmfest" för mig, dem smileysarna.

**Fanny:** Och hon bara förstärker det som hon har sagt.

**Jonna (moderator):** Men om vi tänker igen på meddelandet från Katarina Berg, så hade hon skrivit något om en häst. Då var det ändå så, häst som i ketamin.

**Malin:** Nä jag trodde det var "ut och rida på häst".

**Fanny:** Ja det beror ju på hur man har använt den där hästen...

**Mikaela:** Hehe, ah.

**Jonna (moderator):** har ni något vill tillägga i diskussionen?

**Fanny:** Jag känner bara, vad härliga vi är! Det känner jag verkligen starkt. Jag hade velat printa ut hela våran, amen det blir ju en bok på en miljard sidor.

**Mikaela:** Kärleksbrev ur [football team].

**Johanna:** För studiens skull, så att du får lite fler röster, hehe. Jag tycker ju verkligen, även om jag inte är så mycket emojisvängen så tycker jag att det är väldigt nice med det för det sprider glädje som vi pratade om, men jag hade tyckt lika mycket om gruppen även utan emojis.

**Jonna (moderator):** Jag är inte säker på det, hehe.

**Mikaela:** Jag hade nog inte känt mig lika trygg, jag vet inte.

**Malin:** Det blir ju färgglatt, alltså vem gillar inte färg. Hur trist är det inte att läsa bara text... Alltså jag tycker att det är så extremt befriande att då, blåa, skita i grammatik och bara bomba på med färg när man inte är i skolan liksom. Alltså, mindre grammatik åt folket när man inte behöver. Jag är allt för, så, förkortningar... Alltså allt, skit i och skriva ordentliga ord.

**Fanny:** Som en liten reaktion mot akademisk text

**Malin:** Ja, så himla skönt.

**Jonna (moderator):** Men du

**Johanna:** säger det att du hade tyckt lika mycket om laget och så utan emojis. Då tänker jag igen på det du

**Mikaela:** sa med [other organisation] att mycket om de bråken handlade om missförstånd att någon skrev något...

**Mikaela:** Och så trodde man att den var sur för att, ehm.

**Jonna (moderator):** För att de inte hade emojis, så man vet ju inte om det hade blivit sådana missförståndsgrejer i vår grupp, men äh, det kan man aldrig veta.

**Mikaela:** Sen var ju [name of other organisation] också en annan grupp också liksom, så det är väldigt svårt att jämföra. Men alltså, hade [name of other organization] använt sig av mer smileys så tror jag att det hade haft en annan utgång än vad har haft. Faktiskt.

**Jonna (moderator):** Nä jag använde inte så mycket smileys själv på den tiden...

**Jonna (moderator):** Ok, men då är mötet avslutat.

**–END OF INTERVIEW–**