

By: Arely Zarate-Chavez

### **Context**

This unit is based on showing how pragmatics and co-reference can differ between different languages and language contexts. While it is difficult to pinpoint exactly where this could be used, ideally it would be able to be used in a class setting where there is a diverse group L1 and L2 English speakers. The proficiency of English doesn't matter since we are looking into the emojis themselves and how their meaning may change between each student. This unit would be more suited best for high school and college students since there are some critical thinking skills needed for the activities.

### **Empirical Rationale**

Emojis have become a common part of digital communication. Over 92% of online users use emojis (Yang, 9). Teaching students the difference in meaning people may have in emojis not only will help them communicate more effectively but will also help open their minds to how communication and co-reference comes to be. Words and symbols are only given power by the way that we view and interpret them, so by teaching students the skills to identify when there may be a different meaning, will help them learn how they can use language to better impact their lives.

### **Objectives; students will be able to:**

- Observe and gather emoji use within their social circles.
- Analyze how the emojis are being used.
- Define what certain emojis mean in their discourse.
- Defend how they began to use those definitions.
- Understand when their definition may not be the same as others.

### **Overview and Procedure**

#### **Introduction:**

The teacher will begin by explaining how emojis are commonly used today within interactions on digital media sources. Afterwards proceed by asking the students what common places they use or see emojis in their daily lives. Close the discussion by introducing the first activity.

#### **Activity 1:**

Have the students participate in a survey that collects data on student perceptions of certain emoji. After the students have completed the survey the teacher should compile the data by listing each response that was given for each emoji and present it to the students. Then the students should be asked to look at the data and analyze any potential similarities in definitions not only within all the responses but for any differences in meaning between L1 and L2 speakers. The goal here is to show that the definitions of emojis aren't static and can differ from person to person.

#### **Activity 2:**

After having the students complete the first activity, and have a better understanding of the cognitive difference in emoji use begin to explain this next activity. To begin, ask the students in the next couple of days outside of class to identify and document (by writing down, or taking a screenshot) any emojis they see or use with the people they communicate with. After they bring back their examples have them write alongside the phrase what the emoji meant in the context of the discourse.

Once the students complete this, have them compare their examples with other classmates and find if there are any similarities in emoji use. After they have shared with each other have them write down any similarities or difference they found with their classmates, and turn in their work.

**Activity 3:**

To complete the unit encourage students in the next couple of days to use an emoji in a new way they encountered in the past two activities. Have the students document this new form in a similar way as the previous activity. After the students have done this have them describe any potential reactions they may have had to this new emoji use on their post.

**Organization and Assessment**

The activities should be completed in order so that the students have an opportunity to first examine the emoji use within their own class before sending them off to curate anyone else's online. The activities presented follow the model of Observe, Analyze, Extend. This gives the students building levels of critical thinking. The students for the first two activities will be graded by the following rubrics. The third activity should be offered as a form of extra credit, as it may not be appropriate to make students post digitally for a grade.

**Activity 1**

Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Lacking (1/0 points)
Student was able to find multiple similarities and differences in the emoji use between their classmates	Student was able to find one or two similarities or differences in the emoji use between their classmates	Student was unable to find similarities or differences in the emoji use between their classmates.
Student was able to compare any potential differences in emoji use between L1 and L2 English speakers	-----	Student was unable to compare any potential differences in emoji use between L1 and L2 English speakers
Completion of the survey	-----	-----

**Activity 2**

Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Lacking (1/0 points)
Student was able to bring multiple examples of emoji use	Student was able to bring only a couple examples of emoji use	Student did not bring any examples of emoji use.
Student was able to analyze what the emoji meant and support why it had that meaning in the context of the conversation/post	Student was able to analyze what the emoji meant but did not discuss how the context helped shape its meaning	Student was unable to analyze what the emoji meant, or reasoning was completely off
Student was able to discuss with classmates and describe how their examples were similar and different with good backing as to why	Student was able to discuss with classmates and gave some examples that were similar or different	Student did not discuss with classmates or did not provide examples that were similar or different.