

Pragmatic functions of whatsapp stickers in digital interpersonal discourse: a review

Funciones pragmáticas de las pegatinas de whatsapp en el discurso interpersonal digital:
una revisión

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Abstract

This systematic review examines the pragmatic functions of WhatsApp stickers (digital graphic resources used in instant messaging communication) as multimodal markers that compensate for the absence of prosody in digital discourse. Following a qualitative-descriptive design, the paper analyzes how these visual markers facilitate irony, mitigate social friction, and reduce cognitive effort during interpretation. Based on pragmatic theory, the study synthesizes empirical evidence demonstrating that stickers are not merely decorative, but essential tools for conveying intent in digital interaction. Finally, the review exposes the conclusions yielded by literature analysis, identifies research gaps and proposes future lines of research on usage frequency in professional environments.

Keywords: Nonverbal communication, interpersonal communication, semiology, symbolic languages, mobile communication.

Resumen

Esta revisión sistemática examina las funciones pragmáticas de las pegatinas de WhatsApp (recursos gráficos digitales utilizados en la comunicación mediante mensajería instantánea) como marcadores visuales que compensan la ausencia de prosodia en el discurso digital. Siguiendo un diseño cualitativo-descriptivo, el artículo analiza cómo estos marcadores facilitan la ironía, mitigan la fricción social y reducen el esfuerzo cognitivo durante la interpretación. Basándose en la teoría pragmática, el estudio sintetiza evidencia empírica que demuestra que las pegatinas no son solamente elementos decorativos, sino herramientas esenciales para transmitir la intención en la interacción digital. Finalmente, la revisión expone las conclusiones derivadas del análisis de la literatura, identifica brechas de

investigación y propone futuras líneas de estudio sobre la frecuencia de uso en entornos profesionales.

Palabras clave: Comunicación no verbal, comunicación interpersonal, semiología, lenguaje simbólico, comunicación móvil.

Introduction

The way we communicate has changed more in the last decade than in the previous century. While traditional writing relied solely on the precision of vocabulary, modern digital interaction has rediscovered the importance of visual context. Before the rise of instant messaging, the nuances of a conversation were often lost when moving from speech to text. However, as users sought to reclaim the emotional depth of face-to-face encounters, a "visual turn" occurred. This shift allowed for the integration of images that do not just decorate a message but complete its meaning, setting the stage for a more expressive and personal digital language. The global consolidation of WhatsApp as the primary tool for instant messaging, and the widespread use of stickers have redefined the boundaries of digital discourse (Statista, 2025). Within this context, users have moved beyond plain text to adopt more complex forms of expression. From a linguistic perspective, WhatsApp stickers are considered multimodal pragmatic markers that provide a higher degree of communicative density than traditional emojis facilitating digital interpersonal communication in numerous ways.

However, a significant problem persists in digital environments. Text-based interaction inherently lacks prosody and non-verbal cues such as tone of voice and physical gestures that are vital for human understanding. This limitation often results in pragmatic ambiguity, where the sender's true intention is lost or misinterpreted, leading to cold or disconnected social interactions. Consequently, stickers have emerged as innovative visual resources that bridge the gap between text and emotional intent. As Ochulor et al. (2023) posit, these elements function by graphically encapsulating "illocutionary force," and effectively restoring the warmth and clarity of face-to-face conversation. By acting as contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1982), stickers guide the hearer's interpretation, serving as a visual indicator of complex emotional states and social behaviors.

This visual evolution is deeply connected to how we manage our social relationships. Beyond being simple icons, stickers act as tools for digital politeness, helping users navigate the delicate balance of social interaction. They allow us to say things that words sometimes make too formal or too blunt. By using a sticker, a speaker can soften a request, show empathy, or share a joke that reinforces a social bond. In this sense, these visual resources are not just additions to a chat; they are essential instruments that help maintain the "social harmony" that is often threatened by the coldness of a digital screen.

Therefore, the objective of this review is to examine the pragmatic functions and implications of WhatsApp stickers as paralinguistic visuals through a systematic analysis of current literature. This paper explores how these elements enhance meaning-making, facilitate the performance of speech acts, and redefine social dynamics. Ultimately, this work seeks to demonstrate how stickers transform the pragmatics of digital conversation,

evolving from simple decorative figures into essential tools for digital interpersonal interaction.

Theoretical Framework

What Pragmatics Encompasses

Pragmatics is one of the most dynamic subfields of linguistics primarily concerned with the difference between sentence meaning and speaker meaning. Cutting & Fordyce (2022, Section A, Unit 1A) define it as “the study of what people mean by what they say—how speakers use the context to convey additional meaning and listeners interpret utterances appropriately” (p. 2–4). Essentially pragmatics deals with the implied meaning the speaker wants to convey, the context where the language is used and the listeners interpretations of the utterances produced.

In alignment with this, Levinson (1983) emphasizes that pragmatics investigates those aspects of meaning that are “intrinsically dependent on the speaker, the addressee and the context of utterance” (p. 5). In other words, pragmatics goes beyond the words and structures of a language. It has to do with the speakers’ intentions when producing utterances in a specific context and the way they are understood by others. In the digital context of WhatsApp, this dependency is amplified. Communication operates beyond the text in a blended discourse where the “context” is a combination of immediate digital timing, cultural background, and the visual affordances of the platform. To understand the pragmatic impact of stickers, it is vital to deconstruct the core components of pragmatic analysis to build a better understanding of how visual signs meaningfully support communication through digital text.

The Theory of Speech Acts

The study of stickers as communicative tools must be framed within Speech Act Theory, a foundational pillar of pragmatics established by Austin (1962). This theory revolutionized linguistics by proposing that language is not merely a vehicle for describing reality, but a mechanism for performing actions. Austin introduced the concept of illocutionary force, which refers to the speaker’s intention behind an utterance—what the speaker is *doing* by saying something (e.g., commanding, apologizing, or promising). To ensure successful communication, the recipient must recognize this force, a process that relies heavily on context and shared linguistic conventions.

According to Austin (1962), every utterance involves three simultaneous dimensions:

- Locutionary Act: The physical act of producing a meaningful linguistic expression (the sounds or symbols).
- Illocutionary Act: The action performed *in* saying something (the intent, such as requesting, greeting, or promising).
- Perlocutionary Act: The effect or consequence the utterance has on the listener (e.g., persuading, scaring, or enlightening).

Stickers as Multimodal Speech Acts

In the digital environment of WhatsApp, stickers function as multimodal speech acts that encapsulate this illocutionary force through visual and semiotic means. When a user sends a sticker, they are not just sharing an image; they are performing a functional action that often substitutes a verbal utterance. Applying Austin's three dimensions to this digital context yields the following classification:

- Locutionary dimension: The technical selection and transmission of the stickers.
- Illocutionary dimension: The core communicative intent. For example, sending a "thumbs up" sticker to perform the act of confirming, or a "waving hand" to perform the act of greeting.
- Perlocutionary dimension: The actual impact on the recipient, such as feeling acknowledged, supported or receiving the necessary confirmation to take specific action.
- Furthermore, following Searle's (1969) taxonomy, stickers are frequently used to perform specific categories of speech acts. Some of them include:
- Expressives: These are the most common in WhatsApp as they express the speaker's psychological state. Stickers are ideal for performing the act of thanking, apologizing, or expressing joy and frustration.
- Directives: These aim to get the listener to do something. A sticker can be used to perform a request or a command, often "softening" the imposition to maintain politeness.
- Commissives: These commit the speaker to a future course of action. In this category, a sticker can be used to signal a promise or an agreement to meet at a certain time.

By utilizing these visual resources, interlocutors can clarify and ensure that the speech acts are perceived with the intended urgency or emotion, which stabilizes the social dynamic of the conversation.

Conversational Implicature Theory

To understand how meaning is negotiated beyond the literal surface of a digital message, this review article incorporates the Theory of Conversational Implicature developed by Grice (1975). Grice's central premise is the Cooperative Principle, which suggests that interlocutors generally follow a set of unspoken rules or "maxims" to ensure a successful exchange: Quality (truthfulness), Quantity (informativeness), Relation (relevance), and Manner (clarity). However, Grice observed that speakers often deliberately violate these maxims to generate an implicature, a meaning that is suggested or implied rather than explicitly stated. For the communication to succeed, the listener must infer the speaker's true intent, relying heavily on the shared context of the interaction.

Stickers as Vehicles for Implicature

In the context of WhatsApp, stickers serve as sophisticated tools for flouting Gricean maxims, particularly in the management of irony and sarcasm. Because text-only messages often lack the prosodic cues (like tone of voice or facial expressions) necessary to signal

non-literal meaning. Hence, stickers act as pragmatic markers that guide the recipient toward the correct implicature.

- Flouting the maxim of quality: A user might respond to a tedious or negative update (e.g. mandatory, last-minute staff meeting) with a sticker portraying extreme serenity or joy. By presenting a visual that contradicts the shared context, the sender generates an ironic implicature, allowing the recipient to decode the message as a sarcastic commentary on the situation.
- Flouting the maxim of relation: Sometimes, a seemingly "random" sticker is sent to change the topic or to signal that a conversation has become awkward. The recipient must infer the reason for this sudden shift in relevance.
- Reducing ambiguity: Conversely, stickers can prevent a violation of the Maxim of Manner. When a text message is too brief or ambiguous, a sticker can be added to provide clarity, ensuring that the "implied" tone is friendly and not aggressive, thus maintaining the social harmony of the chat.

By bridging the gap between what is typed and what is meant, stickers allow for a more nuanced and "economical" form of communication where complex social meanings are conveyed with a single visual.

Relevance Theory and Digital Economy

To understand the cognitive motivation behind the use of stickers, this article incorporates Relevance Theory, proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1995). This framework suggests that human communication is not just about encoding and decoding messages, but an inferential process governed by the search for optimal relevance. According to this principle, a listener will invest the least amount of mental effort to achieve the greatest "positive cognitive effect" (a clear understanding of the message). In digital environments, where speed and "typing economy" are prioritized, stickers function as high-relevance stimuli. As Yus (2022) argues in his study of smartphone communication, stickers are "multimodal shortcuts" that provide a massive amount of contextual information with minimal processing effort.

Cognitive Effort and Emotional Clarity

The use of stickers in WhatsApp represents a strategic balance between processing effort and communicative reward:

- Reduction of ambiguity: A text-only message like "I see" can be interpreted as neutral, angry, or bored. By adding or substituting this with a specific sticker, the sender provides a clearer clue for the recipient, significantly reducing the cognitive effort required to disambiguate the tone.
- Positive cognitive effects: Because stickers often carry cultural references, humor, or specific facial expressions, they trigger a richer set of associations in the recipient's mind than plain text. This creates a stronger emotional connection (rapport) between the interlocutors.

Following Yus (2022), stickers act as contextualization cues that fill the emotional gap left by the absence of physical presence. They allow the speaker to be assertive and clear

without typing long explanations, fulfilling the principle of relevance by being both brief and highly informative.

Methodology

Study Design

This research is developed as a systematic literature review (SLR) following a qualitative-descriptive design. As a review article, the methodology does not involve primary data collection; instead, it focuses on the rigorous analysis and synthesis of existing research regarding the pragmatic functions of WhatsApp stickers. This design allows for a comprehensive overview of the "visual turn" in digital linguistics, ensuring that the findings are grounded in established theoretical frameworks rather than isolated observations.

Participants

Given the nature of this research as a systematic literature review, this study does not involve human participants or primary data collection from individuals. Instead, the focus is placed exclusively on the analysis and synthesis of existing academic publications. Therefore, no demographic sampling or experimental groups were required, as the evidence is derived from the units of analysis identified in the following sections.

Instruments

To ensure a high degree of academic rigor, a comprehensive search was conducted across specialized digital databases and AI-assisted research tools, including Google Scholar, Consensus, and Perplexity. The primary instruments for data retrieval were Boolean search strings and specific keywords such as: "*WhatsApp stickers*," "*cyberpragmatics*," "*multimodal discourse*," and "*pragmatic implications*." These tools facilitated the identification of high-impact literature that addresses the intersection of visual semiotics and interpersonal communication. The selection criteria prioritized research papers published between 2017 and 2025 to ensure the inclusion of current linguistic trends. This specific timeframe is justified by the rapid evolution of digital platforms and the formal introduction of stickers in WhatsApp (2018), which triggered a shift in how 'graphicons' are studied within the field of modern pragmatics.

Procedures

The research process was structured into three systematic stages to ensure a cohesive integration of classical linguistics and digital multimodality:

- Literature Search and Selection: Initial screening of titles and abstracts based on their relevance to Speech Act and Implicature theories.
- Thematic Categorization: The selected literature was organized into four analytical axes: (a) irony and prosody, (b) politeness and mitigation, (c) ambiguity, and (d) cultural identity. This allowed for a cross-comparison of findings from diverse contexts, such as the works of Onuoha (2022) and Linares Bernabéu and Yus (2025).

- Evaluation and Refinement: A thorough revision of the selected sources was conducted to ensure that each study contributed a solid foundation for understanding how stickers function as essential tools for conveying intent.

Data Analysis

The evidence was synthesized using Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995) as the primary analytical lens. This stage focused on identifying how stickers function as autonomous "graphicons" and their specific role in reducing the recipient's cognitive effort during digital interactions (Yus, 2022). The qualitative data was condensed to create Table 1, which serves as a taxonomic summary of the pragmatic functions identified in the literature.

In conclusion, the methodology for this review was based on a deliberate and careful selection of academic literature that addresses the pragmatic functions of digital markers. Each theoretical framework and study included was chosen for its relevance to Speech Act and Implicature theories in modern communication. Following this initial selection, a thorough revision was conducted to ensure that the integration of classical linguistics and digital multimodality was both accurate and cohesive. Consequently, the following section presents the results of this synthesis, organized by the pragmatic functions identified through the systematic analysis of the selected corpus.

Results

The following analysis synthesizes the prevailing academic perspectives on the pragmatic functions of stickers, structured around the four central themes identified in the systematic review of literature. To provide a clear overview of the current state of research, **Table 1** summarizes the empirical evidence gathered from the primary sources analyzed, highlighting the key roles of WhatsApp stickers in mitigation, identity construction, and cognitive economy.

Table 1.

Synthesis of Pragmatic Functions of Stickers across Selected Academic Studies.

Author(s) & Year	Core Focus / Methodology	Key Pragmatic Findings	Theoretical Link
Linares Bernabéu & Yus (2025)	Quantitative corpus analysis (598 stickers).	56.9% of stickers clarify/emphasize sender intent. 18.41% act as audience inference/softening tools.	Intentionality & Mitigation
Sampietro (2023)	Evolution of digital communication.	Stickers provide a more precise "visual tone" than emojis, overcoming the prosodic void.	Paralanguage & Prosody
Karjo & Rahmadhito (2023)	Cyberpragmatic analysis of humor.	Humorous implicature arises from the incongruity between text and image in stickers.	Gricean Implicature

Onuoha (2022)	Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA).	Stickers (graphicons) function as autonomous communicative units, not just textual supplements.	Multimodality
Hasyim et al. (2024)	Linguistic variation among students.	Stickers constitute a "digital dialect" that reinforces emotional connection and group identity.	Sociolinguistics & Identity
Arango Álvarez (2022)	Mobile language evolution.	Stickers are metalinguistic tools that define the subjectivity of younger generations.	Metalinguistics

Source. Own elaboration based on classical pragmatic foundations (1975-1995) and recent empirical research on digital markers (2011-2025).

The systematic search and subsequent analysis of the literature revealed a consistent pattern in the deployment of digital visual markers. It was found that WhatsApp stickers functioned not merely as aesthetic additions, but as high-density pragmatic units that addressed the inherent limitations of text-based communication. Throughout the reviewed studies, researchers consistently observed that users utilized these "graphicons" to restore the paralinguistic cues—such as intonation and facial expressions—that were otherwise lost in asynchronous messaging. Furthermore, the data showed that the effectiveness of these markers was heavily dependent on a shared "interpretive community," where the success of the communicative act was determined by the recipient's ability to decode the visual implicature intended by the sender. Ultimately, the results confirmed that stickers have transitioned from casual icons to sophisticated tools for managing digital politeness and social identity.

Discussion

The findings presented in the previous section demonstrate that WhatsApp stickers have evolved from simple decorative figures into essential tools for digital interpersonal interaction. This section explores the implications of these results through four analytical axes.

1. Irony and Sarcasm: Compensating for the Loss of Prosody

In the domain of digital interpersonal communication, the absence of physical presence creates a non-verbal gap that complicates the transmission of non-literal meanings. Current research suggests that stickers function as advanced pragmatic markers that effectively replace paralanguage. According to Linares Bernabéu and Yus (2025), a significant majority of sticker usage (56.9%) is aimed at clarifying or emphasizing the sender's intention, particularly in contexts involving humor or social play. This is reinforced by Sampietro (2023), who observes that stickers have gained prominence over emojis due to their larger semantic load and ability to provide a more precise "visual tone," which is fundamental for signaling irony.

The reviewed literature emphasizes that these digital images act as expressive markers that compensate for the absence of nonverbal cues in written discourse, such as facial gestures

and intonation. This multimodal collaboration is crucial when users "flout" Gricean maxims to generate conversational implicatures. For instance, Karjo and Rahmadhito (2023) demonstrate that the incongruity between a sticker's text and its image is a primary source of digital humor, allowing users to convey sarcasm without the risk of being taken literally. Similarly, Chukaokeke and Obiamalu (2021) found that students rely on stickers to communicate complex thoughts that words alone cannot capture, using them as tools to "enforce meaning" through visual implicature.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of stickers as vehicles for irony also reflects group identity. Hasyim et al. (2024) argue that the innovative use of stickers among university students showcases a high level of language proficiency and the creation of emotional connections through shared sarcasm. Furthermore, Arango Álvarez (2022) notes that stickers have evolved into "metalinguistic tools" that define the digital dialect of younger generations. Onuoha (2022) suggests that these "graphics" do not merely supplement text but communicate autonomously by encoding complex emotional states. Consequently, as Sampietro and Pérez-Sabater (2025) conclude, the multimodal turn in pragmatics recognizes that stickers reduce the cognitive effort required to decode non-literal intent, fulfilling the principle of optimal relevance in an increasingly visual digital context.

2. Politeness and Assertiveness: Stickers as Mitigating Devices

Maintaining harmony in social digital discourse requires strategic word choices to manage potential misunderstandings. The analyzed literature suggests that stickers play a crucial role in politeness strategies, acting as mitigating devices that soften the illocutionary force of directives or potentially offensive comments. According to Linares Bernabéu and Yus (2025), a significant portion of sticker usage (18.41%) is dedicated to audience inference, specifically helping to "soften, challenge, or elucidate messages," thereby enhancing overall clarity and relational rapport.

- **Mitigation of Directives:** When users perform speech acts such as requests or commands, stickers are often used to reduce the imposition on the hearer. Sampietro (2023) notes that stickers are preferred over emojis in these contexts because their multimodal nature provides a more robust "affective frame," making a request seem less demanding and more collaborative.
- **Social Bonding and Group Identity:** The deployment of digital stickers serves as an interactive mechanism to strengthen group cohesion and mutual solidarity. By selecting a visual marker that references an established insider joke or a shared cultural framework, the sender reinforces a collective sense of belonging. This shared alignment functions as a pragmatic buffer, mitigating potential friction or misalignment in the interaction. This is further supported by Hasyim et al. (2024), who argue that students utilize stickers as innovative strategies to foster emotional connections and achieve specific communicative goals without appearing confrontational.
- **Assertiveness without Aggression:** Stickers allow for a form of "visual assertiveness." Onuoha (2022) observes that these "graphics" can communicate complex emotional states autonomously, allowing users to state their position clearly but with a playful layer that prevents the message from being perceived as

cold. In this sense, stickers fulfill the search for optimal relevance (Yus, 2021) by providing the necessary "contextual clues" to ensure the recipient interprets the sender's tone as friendly or neutral.

As Sampietro and Pérez-Sabater (2025) highlight, this "multimodal turn" in pragmatics shows that meaning-making in WhatsApp is an interplay of semiotic modes where the visual element (the sticker) often carries the weight of the social "repair" or "softening" that text alone cannot achieve.

3. Ambiguity and Misunderstandings: The Limits of Visual Interpretation

While stickers are primarily used to enhance clarity and provide emotional context, their multimodal nature also introduces a layer of semiotic complexity that can lead to "pragmatic failure" or misunderstandings. The analyzed studies suggest that, unlike words which have more conventionalized definitions, stickers rely heavily on a shared cultural and contextual background for correct decoding.

- **The Problem of Polysemy and Context:** Onuoha (2022) argues that "graphicons" (including stickers) are similar to text in that they must be comprehended within a specific social framework. However, because they often communicate complex emotional states autonomously, they are susceptible to varying interpretations depending on the recipient's personal history or group identity. This is particularly evident when the "visual implicature" intended by the sender does not align with the recipient's mental model, leading to what Tang et al. (2021) describe as communication noise in digital environments.
- **Dialectal Variation and Generational Gaps:** As noted by Hasyim et al. (2024), the innovative linguistic strategies found in stickers often constitute a form of digital dialect among specific groups (such as university students). When these stickers are used outside their original "interpretive community," the meaning can become opaque. Arango Álvarez (2022) supports this by stating that the evolution of mobile language creates new semiotic codes that older generations or "outsiders" might find ambiguous, violating the Maxim of Manner (Grice, 1975) due to a lack of clarity for the uninitiated.
- **The Role of Non-Verbal Cues:** In chat apps, graphics and stickers help show the tone of voice and feelings that we usually get from spoken conversation. Even so, if someone sends a sticker by itself with no text to explain it, the message becomes harder to interpret, making it much easier for the other person to misunderstand it.
- **The Responsibility of the Recipient:** As Sampietro and Pérez-Sabater (2025) point out, in the "multimodal turn," the responsibility for disambiguation shifts to the recipient, who must invest more cognitive effort, sometimes unsuccessfully, to achieve optimal relevance (Yus, 2021). If the visual clue is too abstract or culturally specific, the communicative act may fail to achieve its perlocutionary effect.

4. The Cultural Component: Identity, Context, and Shared Codes

The effectiveness of a sticker as a pragmatic tool is inextricably linked to the cultural background of the interlocutors. The reviewed studies indicate that stickers are not universal signs, but rather culturally situated artifacts that require a shared "interpretive

community" to function. According to Linares Bernabéu and Yus (2025), a significant portion of sticker functions (56.9%) is dedicated to reinforcing group identity and social status, suggesting that the choice of a sticker is a deliberate act of cultural affiliation.

- **Identity and Digital Dialects:** Hasyim et al. (2024) argue that sticker usage among students creates a specific "digital dialect" characterized by lexical and semantic variations that strengthen emotional connections. This "in-group" communication relies on cultural references that might be opaque to outsiders. Similarly, Marca Quituizaca (2023) notes that for youth in specific regions (e.g., Gualaceo), stickers act as a "new language" that legitimizes their unique way of bonding through shared humor and local references.
- **Memetic Culture and Subjectivity:** The evolution of stickers is closely tied to "memetic culture." Arango Álvarez (2022) highlights that stickers often repurpose local or global memes to express a user's subjectivity, transforming a mass-media image into a personal "metalinguistic tool."
- **Cultural Implicatures:** From a pragmatic perspective, the "visual implicature" of a sticker often depends on cultural knowledge. Chukaokeke and Obiamalu (2021) found that students use stickers to "enforce meaning" through cultural constructs that words alone cannot capture. If the recipient does not share the cultural frame of the sticker (e.g., a specific local celebrity or a regional joke), the principle of relevance, as applied to digital context by Yus (2021) is violated, since the cognitive effort to decode the message becomes too high, leading to communicative failure.

In summary, the systematic analysis of the selected literature demonstrated that WhatsApp stickers have consolidated as indispensable pragmatic resources in contemporary digital discourse. The evidence gathered across various cultural and linguistic contexts showed a clear transition from the use of simple emojis to these more complex 'graphicons, which provide the necessary 'visual tone' to safeguard social harmony. By effectively mapping these functions, ranging from the mitigation of directives to the construction of digital dialects, this section established the basis for understanding how visuality compensates for the lack of physical prosody.

Conclusions

The present review demonstrates that WhatsApp stickers have transcended their role as visual markers to become essential pragmatic tools in digital discourse. By bridging the "prosodic void" inherent in text-based communication, these multimodal artifacts allow users to encode complex intentions that words alone often fail to capture (Sampietro, 2023). Specifically, stickers function as paralinguistic substitutes that facilitate irony and as mitigating devices that soften face-threatening acts, thereby reducing the recipient's cognitive effort to achieve optimal relevance (Linares Bernabéu & Yus, 2025; Yus, 2021). Furthermore, their effectiveness is inextricably linked to shared cultural codes, reinforcing group identity and solidarity (Hasyim et al., 2024; Onuoha, 2022).

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