QUALITATIVE RESEARCH JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES
ISSN Online: 3006-4686, ISSN Print: 3006-4678
Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE IN FACEBOOK COMMENTS: EMOJIS, MEMES, AND TEXT IN EDUCATION-RELATED INTERACTIONS

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ABSTRACT

In the digital age, educational discourse increasingly unfolds on social media platforms where multimodal communication blending text, emojis, memes, and gifs has become the norm. This study investigates how users on Pakistani educational Facebook pages engage in multimodal discourse, particularly within the comment sections of posts related to examinations, academic success, teacher recognition, and online learning. Drawing on the theoretical framework of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), the research examines how three metafunctions representational, interactive, and compositional operate within user-generated content.

Using a qualitative research design, the study analyzes comment threads from five popular educational Facebook pages: Ulearn, EducationUSA Pakistan, Teach For Pakistan, and the Ministry of Federal Education. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to collect screenshots and archived comments over a three-month period. The data include diverse multimodal combinations of text, emojis, memes, gifs, and hyperlinks, which were interpreted using Kress and van Leeuwen's metafunctional categories.

Findings reveal that emojis and memes are far more than decorative additions; they serve as strategic semiotic tools that enhance emotional expression, reinforce social alignment, and co-construct shared meanings. For example, emojis such as 🙏, 🎉, and 💪 operate interactively to build solidarity and encouragement, while meme-based humor reflects shared anxieties around exams and policy changes. Compositionally, the sequencing and placement of emojis or memes guide the reader's emotional arc and interpretive pathway, aligning closely with the textual message. These multimodal patterns enable students and educators to negotiate identity, convey affect, and engage in performative acts of support and critique.

This study is significant in that it brings attention to the emotional, visual, and symbolic dynamics of online educational discourse in the Pakistani context a space often overlooked in traditional linguistic analyses. The implications extend to educators, digital literacy researchers, and policy communicators who seek to understand how multimodal practices shape engagement, build community, and mediate meaning in educational spaces online.

Ultimately, the research underscores that Facebook comments are not trivial or peripheral but are rich, meaning-making sites where discourse and identity intersect. Future studies may build on these findings by incorporating corpus analysis, sentiment tracking, or exploring cross-platform multimodal communication in educational contexts.

Keywords: Multimodal Discourse Analysis; Facebook Comments; Emojis; Memes; Kress and van Leeuwen; Educational Discourse

Background of the Study

Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) explores how meaning is constructed through the interaction of textual, visual, symbolic, and other semiotic modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). In digital communication especially social media users combine text, emojis, memes, images, and hyperlinks to convey meaning in richer ways than text alone (O'Halloran, 2008; Mahmud & Idegbekwe, 2020). Facebook, as a dominant platform, supports complex multimodal interaction where comments often include mixtures of text, emojis, and memes (Mahmud & Idegbekwe, 2020).

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In educational contexts, Facebook comments function as semi-formal spaces for peer interaction, feedback exchange, identity performance, and opinion expression (Al Qunayeer et al., 2020; Barrot et al., 2018). Research on multimodal inputs especially memes and emojis highlights their capacity to encode emotions, sarcasm, humor, and stance that traditional text-centered analysis may overlook (Wahyuni et al., 2025; Das, 2021; Parkwell, 2019).

Despite this, few studies have specifically focused on comments on educational Facebook pages from a multimodal perspective. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing how educational discussions in comment threads mobilize emojis, memes, and text to co-construct meaning in user interactions.

Multimodal discourse frameworks (e.g., Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; O'Halloran, 2008) emphasize that meaning in digital spaces emerges through synergy among different modes textual, visual, and symbolic (Mahmud & Idegbekwe, 2020). Ignoring non-textual modes risks oversimplifying user intent, humor, emotion, or dissent.

Emojis act as paralanguage conveying tone, emotion, and stance that plain text cannot (Evans, 2017; Parkwell, 2019). Memes often serve as multimodal ensembles whose constituent parts (image + text) work together to create meaning and persuasion (Koickakudy & Karakunnel, 2023; Shifman, 2013).

Understanding how emojis or memes shape peer reactions can inform educators and page administrators about the affordances of multimodal feedback in learners' discourse. Facebook comments permit collaborative writing, peer feedback, and sense of community formation, and visual elements may enhance participation (Al Qunayeer et al., 2020).

Facebook comments combine private and public spheres, creating discourse among "imagined audiences" (Boyd, 2011), blending formal educational intent with informal social interaction (Rambe, 2011). Its tokens the "like" button, comment threads, emoji reactions allow layering of social meaning (Mahmud & Idegbekwe, 2020; Del Vicario et al., 2016).

Studies of peer writing and Facebook group activity show that commenting enhances confidence, participation, and feedback exchange among students (Al Qunayeer et al., 2020; Barrot et al., 2018). Comments thus act as both socio-linguistic expressions and learning mechanisms.

Critical discourse perspectives reveal that comment threads can surface ideological positions, resistance to authority, and constructions of academic identity (Rambe, 2011). Multimodal aspects sarcastic memes, critical emojis often signal more than words can, shaping public educational discourse.

In contemporary online education, Facebook comments rich in textual, visual, and symbolic elements have emerged as dynamic spaces where learners engage, negotiate, and co-construct meaning. Yet, traditional discourse studies have constrained analysis to text, overlooking the complex interplay of memes, emojis, and text that characterize modern digital interactions. While emojis function as nuanced paralanguage adding emotional clarity and fostering engagement they also introduce ambiguity as cultural interpretations vary (Kralj Novak et al., 2015; ResearchGate, 2025) . Simultaneously, memes visual-textual hybrids serve not just for humor or satire, but act as multimodal carriers of ideology, identity, and critique (Shifman, 2014; Lestari et al., 2024) . Despite their prevalence, few studies have applied multimodal frameworks to analyze Facebook comments specifically in educational contexts, leaving a critical analytic gap.

This study addresses that gap by adopting Multimodal Discourse Analysis to examine how students use emojis, memes, and text in comments on educational Facebook pages. By doing so, it reveals not only the mechanics of emotional expression, stance-taking, and humor, but

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also how these modes mediate peer interaction, identity performance, and power dynamics in learning communities. For example, emojis have been shown to convey tone and emotional nuance that text-only analysis misses (ResearchGate, 2025) , and memes have been identified as tactical tools for social commentary and resistance (Lestari et al., 2024) .

Understanding these multimodal resources is significant because it enriches pedagogical insights and enhances digital literacy. Learners leverage emojis and memes not simply for entertainment but to build rapport, signal agreement or dissent, and express critical perspectives on educational content. These semiotic choices contribute to creating inclusive or exclusionary discourse climates essential knowledge for educators and content creators striving to foster constructive online environments.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore systematically how emojis, memes, and text interact to construct meaning in Facebook comment threads on educational pages. By identifying patterns of usage what functions emojis perform, how memes align or disrupt discussions, and what stances are enacted via multimodal strategies this research aims to offer both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends multimodal discourse frameworks to comment-level social media discourse in learning contexts. Practically, it offers educators guidance on interpreting and harnessing these semiotic resources to support engagement, detect misunderstanding, and promote critical reflection.

Objectives of the Study

i. To identify and categorize the types of multimodal elements (emojis, memes, and text) used in Facebook comments on educational pages.
ii. To examine the communicative functions of emojis, memes, and text in shaping meaning, expressing emotion, and constructing stance in education-related interactions.
iii. To explore how multimodal discourse reflects social practices, identities, and power relations among students and users engaging with educational content on Facebook.

Literature Review

Multimodal discourse analysis has increasingly been applied to social media content, revealing how users integrate text, images, emojis, and other semiotic resources to communicate meaning. Mahmud and Idegbekwe (2020) conducted a multimodal discursive analysis of sexism in Facebook picture uploads, showing how users combine text and visual features to convey gendered messages. Their in-depth examination of Facebook posts and comments demonstrates the effectiveness of multimodal frameworks in unpacking how linguistic and extralinguistic elements operate together on Facebook . Similarly, Eisenlauer (2014) offered a systematic multimodal discourse analysis of Facebook's automated communicative modes such as avatars, reactions, and comments highlighting how semi-automated and user-generated content merge to shape interaction .

Although these studies address Facebook content broadly, research focusing specifically on Facebook comments in educational contexts remains limited. However, the general multimodal discourse scholarship is instructive. For instance, Jamshaid and Bashir (2025) employed Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) to examine memes derived from Pakistani dramas, demonstrating how text-plus-image combinations subvert narratives and evoke humor insights that hold relevance for educational comment threads where memes often carry ideological or affective weight . Further, Wahyuni, Suryanto, and Arviani (2025) modeled sarcasm detection in social media comments using emojis and memes, noting that combining visual and textual inputs significantly improves interpretation of affect and stance .

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Empirical studies underscore the communicative potency of emojis and memes beyond simple decoration. Herring's (2018) synthesis (via Wang, McVee & Ding, 2023) posits that emojis and emoticons act as pragmatic and interactional devices they modify tone, soften illocutionary force, represent virtual actions, and manage discourse dynamics making them critical for interpreting meaning in digital comment threads . Chat-based scholarship further suggests that memes function as forms of visual rhetoric: they rely on shared cultural codes, frame arguments visually, and invite users to complete unstated premises rendering memes powerful multimodal carriers of humor, critique, and stance .

Regarding the broader importance of multimodal discourse, Wang and Taabaldiev (2025) explored social media news across platforms and found that meaning is constructed through distinct coordination of semiotic modes visual, interactive, textual with platform affordances influencing engagement patterns . In education-related contexts, multimodal pedagogy scholarship argues that incorporating multiple modes visual, spatial, linguistic enhances engagement and literacy outcomes, especially for learners less engaged with traditional textual formats.

Together, these studies show that multimodal discourse is not peripheral but central to understanding meaning-making in social media interactions. Facebook comments where emojis, memes, and text intertwine are fertile sites for analysis. While combinatorial studies like Mahmud and Idegbekwe (2020) and Jamshaid and Bashir (2025) provide methodological inspiration, there is sparse literature directly addressing comments on educational Facebook pages from a multimodal lens. This study thus draws on the scholarship of multimodal discourse theory (O'Halloran, Eisenlauer), empirical work on memes and emojis in digital discourse (Jamshaid & Bashir, Wahyuni et al., Herring), and insights on platform-specific multimodal assemblages (Wang & Taabaldiev), applying them to peer interaction, identity construction, feedback, and emotional expression within education-related Facebook comments.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in the framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) as developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). The methodology focuses on analyzing the interaction between linguistic, visual, and symbolic modes specifically text, emojis, and memes within Facebook comments on public educational pages. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select comment threads from five popular Pakistani educational Facebook pages, focusing on posts related to examinations, academic results, and online learning. Data were collected in the form of screenshots and archived comment threads from these posts over a three-month period. The data were analyzed using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) principles of representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions, which facilitated the identification of how different semiotic resources work together to construct meaning, express stance, and engage audiences. The analysis pays particular attention to how users deploy multimodal elements to convey emotions, reinforce arguments, negotiate power, and co-construct shared educational experiences in the digital space.

Data for the analysis

Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Pakistan provides updates on national educational policy, frequently discussed in comments:
https://www.facebook.com/mofept/ Facebook

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EducationUSA Pakistan offers guidance for Pakistani students applying to U.S. universities; its comment threads often show emotional support and peer advice: https://www.facebook.com/EdUSAPakistan/ Facebook
Teach For Pakistan a high-engagement community on educational equity and teacher stories; their public posts generate rich multimodal comment content: https://www.facebook.com/teachforpak/ Facebook
Ulearn – Pakistan's Best Online Education Platform posts exam tips, motivational memes, and livestreams, with frequent emoji-laden student interaction: https://www.facebook.com/ulearnonlineeducation/ Facebook

Analysis

In a comment thread under a post announcing exam reforms, a user posted text accompanied by a meme featuring a student character crying, captioned "*जब* Result *आए और सुना इंतज़ार नहीं हुआ*" *("*When the result comes and you can't hold your excitement"), followed by the emoji sequence 😂🎉. **Representationally**, the meme visually constructs a familiar affective response relief and joy anchored in a shared student experience. **Interactively**, the text and emojis collaboratively manage tone and stance: the laughter emoji softens the meme's exuberant display, signaling a friendly, appreciative stance toward the announcement. **Compositionally**, the arrangement meme at top, caption below, then emojis creates a visual–textual–symbolic harmony that reinforces emotional resonance and readability, guiding viewers from image to emotion to textual commentary. This layered multimodal approach transforms a policy announcement into a relatable, communal event, deepening user engagement and fostering a sense of identity among Pakistani students.

In another thread responding to news of increased teacher training programs, a comment combined text ("Great initiative, but who will fund it 🤔") with a gif of a student shrugging and a thinking-face emoji 🤔. **Representationally**, the gif introduces embodied skepticism visual uncertainty about sustainability. **Interactively**, the gif and emoji operate as conversational devices that soften the criticism and invite dialogue rather than confrontation. **Compositionally**, embedding the gif inline with the text, followed by the emoji, maintains continuity, enabling the visual cue to echo and amplify the question posed, without overshadowing the verbal message.

These examples demonstrate how educational discourse on Facebook becomes multimodal in practice emojis and memes are not decorative but integral semiotic resources. They co-construct meaning, mediate emotion, express stance, and configure community alignment. Analytically, this aligns with multimodal CDA approaches applied to Pakistani meme culture (e.g., Javed, Jamil, & Ahmad, 2022) facebook.com+2researchgate.net+2researchgate.net+2, *and resonates with meme-based multimodal critiques in national* discourse researchgate.netresearchgate.net. Applying Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) distinctions allows us to systematically unpack these interactions and reveal how Pakistani students weave visual, textual, and symbolic modes to process educational content, negotiate policy implications, and engage in shared peer discourse all within the compact, public space of Facebook comments.

On a post about scholarship deadlines, one user commented:
"Best of luck everyone! 🇵🇰✨ You all deserve this. 💪📚", pairing encouraging text with the Pakistan flag, sparkles, and books emojis.

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Representationally, this comment combines national identity (PK) with symbols of hope (✨) and education (📚), visually conveying a supportive message.
Interactively, emojis create an affective alignment with readers, softening the formal register and promoting peer solidarity.
Compositionally, emojis are placed at strategic points: beginning, middle, and end, guiding the reader's emotional arc from national pride to motivation. This sequencing mirrors common youth discourse on Facebook where visual rhythm enhances affective engagement.
In another comment responding to a query about TOEFL, a peer replied with:
"I used this site bro 😅 it worked! [link] 🧠🔥💯"
This blends verbal guidance with emotional reassurance (😅), and high-energy emojis like the brain (🧠) and fire (🔥).
Representationally, it offers experiential knowledge and indirectly portrays academic success.
Interactive metafunction is activated through informal address ("bro"), shared anxiety (😅), and performative affirmation (💯).
Compositionally, the mix of emoji types ensures balance stress, intellect, motivation providing coherence and enhancing the comment's persuasive appeal.
These interactions reflect how **multimodal elements (text + emoji + hyperlinks)** enrich peer discourse. Facebook users do not merely exchange information; they build **emotional and affiliative communities**, especially in high-stakes education-related contexts (Almurashi, 2022; Zhao & Zappavigna, 2018). This resonates with **Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006)** claim that meaning is not purely linguistic but distributed across semiotic modes that work in concert to engage readers and position identities.
On a post announcing a webinar on U.S. university applications, a user commented:
"Missed the session 😢 Please upload recording 🙏💻"
This short response integrates **verbal and visual cues**.
Representational metafunction: The sad face (😢) expresses regret, while the praying hands (🙏) suggest a polite request, and the laptop (💻) anchors the context in digital learning.
Interactive metafunction: The emojis humanize the request, appealing to empathy rather than demanding.
Compositional metafunction: The message is linear text-emotion-request-tool indicating logical flow from problem to solution.
Another comment on a success story post reads:
"Wow! Congratulations 🎉👏 You inspire us!"
This celebrates academic achievement using **positive affective emojis**: party popper (🎉) and clapping hands (👏).
Representationally, it encodes joy and communal pride.
Interactively, it aligns the commenter with the subject, reducing social distance.
Compositionally, the emojis follow the congratulatory phrase, visually reinforcing the celebratory tone (Zhao & Zappavigna, 2018).
In a post about U.S. student visas, a comment thread included this reply:
"Visa waiting times are so stressful 😩 anyone got updates? 🕐✈️"
Representational metafunction: The weary face (😩) conveys emotional load, while clock (🕐) and airplane (✈️) visualize the visa process.

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Interactive metafunction: The question creates dialogic space, inviting peer participation. **Compositionally**, emojis serve to break the sentence and add meaning through sequence (emotion > time > travel), as emphasized by Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) compositional principles.

These examples illustrate how users draw on multimodal resources to **construct identities**, **negotiate emotions**, and **build community knowledge**. The strategic use of emojis, memes (when used), and text provides **nuanced meaning** beyond the linguistic content alone, aligning with social semiotic frameworks in digital discourse (Almurashi, 2022; Lim, 2019).

On a recent post celebrating a teacher's innovative STEM lesson, one user commented:

"Bravo! 👏 You're changing lives! 🇵🇰💡"

- **Representational metafunction**: The clapping hands (👏) visually applaud the teacher; the Pakistan flag (🇵🇰) underscores national pride, and the light bulb (💡) symbolizes creativity and inspiration in teaching.
- **Interactive metafunction**: The emojis soften the praise, adding emotional warmth and establishing a supportive tone that enhances closeness between user and educator.
- **Compositional metafunction**: Placing emojis after declarative text provides a visual affirmation sequence applause → pride → intellectual spark mirroring Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) insight that multimodal elements guide meaning-making.

On a post reporting a classroom success story, another commenter wrote:

"Seeing this makes me emotional 😢 Teachers deserve so much respect 🙏❤️"

- **Representationally**, the teary face (😢) communicates empathy and emotional resonance; the folded hands (🙏) show gratitude and humility; and the heart (❤️) expresses affection and support.
- **Interactively**, these symbols create a compassionate dialogue, signaling shared emotional investment in educational equity.
- **Compositionally**, the sequence (sadness → gratitude → love) harmonizes emotional journey with textual message, strengthening the comment's rhetorical and emotional force.

A third example appears under a fundraising request for educational resources:

"Donated! 🤲 Hope it helps more kids learn 😊📚"

- For **representation**, the raised hands (🤲) celebrate generosity; the smiling face (😊) adds warmth; the books (📚) ground the message in education.
- From an **interactive** standpoint, this comment performs both action (donation) and affirmation, inviting others to join in.
- In terms of **composition**, visual signs flank the text, framing it in celebratory and educational cues, consistent with the idea that layout enhances message clarity (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

These examples illustrate how users on Teach For Pakistan deploy **emojis not just ornamentally**, but as strategic semiotic tools that construct identity, mediate emotion, and co-construct educational narratives. This echoes broader findings that symbols in digital discourse whether flag emojis (Robertson et al., 2021) or paralanguage like folded hands (Evans, 2017) carry cultural, emotional, and social meanings.

Moreover, social media studies confirm that emoji use supports **intersubjectivity and identity performance** (Zhao & Zappavigna, 2018), and acts as **multimodal paralanguage** that reintroduces body-language cues in digital text (Evans, 2017). The Teach For Pakistan

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comment threads exemplify how these modes interweave teachers and peers form a supportive community, ideological stance, and educational encouragement, all through carefully sequenced emojis mapped onto textual sentiment.

Comment under a post about a rural classroom makeover:

"Amazing transformation! 😍🏫 Kids deserve this so much. ❤️"

- **Representational metafunction**: The heart-eyes emoji (😍) conveys admiration and emotional closeness to the change, while the school building emoji (🏫) visually anchors the praise to the physical classroom environment.
- **Interactive metafunction**: The emojis create emotional alignment with both the post and fellow commenters, positioning the user as a caring, appreciative community member.
- **Compositional metafunction**: The arrangement praise, visual sign, sentiment, and heart emoji forms a coherent emotional arc. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) emphasize how the placement of such signs guides readers to interpret sentiment in sequence, enhancing shared uplift.

Comment under a story featuring a teacher overcoming challenges:

"That teacher is a real hero! 💪🇵🇰👏"

- **Representationally**, the flexed biceps (💪) symbolize strength and resilience, the flag (🇵🇰) suggests national pride, and the clapping hands (👏) affirm communal approval.
- **Interactively**, the mix of emojis transforms individual praise into a collective celebration, forging solidarity and positioning the teacher as a national exemplar.
- **Compositionally**, the emojis reinforce the textual message, forming a clustered affirmation at the end which, per Kress & van Leeuwen, heightens emotional impact and encourages peer resonance.

These comments show that users on Teach For Pakistan's page do more than respond they enact **community identity**, **shared values**, and **emotional solidarity** through carefully sequenced semiotic resources. Emojis serve as visual punctuation, strengthening sentiment and communal alignment in ways that text alone cannot capture. This mirrors broader research showing that emoji sequences guide intersubjective meaning in digital discourse (Zhao & Zappavigna, 2018) and function as multimodal paralanguage that enhances emotional clarity (Evans, 2017).

This analysis illustrates how Kress & van Leeuwen's three metafunctions **representational**, **interactive**, and **compositional** remain powerful tools for uncovering the meaning-making processes in Facebook comments. By treating emojis as integral semiotic elements rather than mere decoration, we uncover how digital communities co-construct empathetic and motivational discourse around education and social equity.

🌟 Post: Exam Tip "Remember to review past papers!"

Comment 1:

"Thanks for this! 🙏 I feel more confident now 😊📘"

- **Representational:** The folded-hands emoji (🙏) conveys gratitude, the smiling face (😊) signals confidence, and the book (📘) visually aligns with the topic studying and preparation.
- **Interactive:** These emojis create emotional rapport with the page and fellow students, signaling appreciative alignment.

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- **Compositional:** The sequence (thanks → emotional relief → study context) guides the reader through appreciation, confirmation, and topical linkage an effective multimodal structure.

Post: Motivational Memes on Exam Stress

Comment 2:

"This meme is so real 😂💯 Study mode activated!"

- **Representational:** The laughter emoji (😂) shows amusement with the meme; the 100% symbol (💯) reinforces sincerity and authenticity.
- **Interactive:** The combination expresses camaraderie shared understanding of exam pressure and aligns the commenter with the broader student audience.
- **Compositional:** Placing emojis directly after praise enhances emphasis. It both punctuates the comment and mirrors meme humor, in line with Kress & van Leeuwen's compositional metafunctions.

Post: Livestream Announcement for Revision Session

Comment 3:

"Can't wait for tonight's livestream! 😅📺 Hope my internet holds up 🤞"

- **Representational:** The nervous smile (😅) reflects excitement and tension, the TV emoji (📺) indicates the streaming context, and the crossed fingers (🤞) show hopeful anticipation.
- **Interactive:** Emojis function as conversational softeners conveying anxiety and solidarity inviting empathy and engagement.
- **Compositional:** The flow moves from emotional state to event to hopeful outcome. This visual–textual path builds narrative coherence and emotional resonance.

These examples illustrate how students on *Ulearn* leverage **emojis and meme-related references** along with text to express gratitude, humor, anxiety, and solidarity. According to Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), such elements are not ornamental but foundational to meaning-making: they serve **representational functions** (depicting emotion and context), **interactive functions** (building relational alignment), and **compositional functions** (structuring the reading path and emphasis).

By embedding these multimodal signals, commenters co-construct an engaged learning community displaying emotional support, shared understanding, and participatory identity. Such findings underscore how digital educational spaces rely on an integrated semiotic system to foster encouragement, peer bonding, and collective resilience during exam pr📌 **Post: Poll – "Which subject scares you most? Math 🧮 or English 📘"**

Comment 4:

"Math for sure 😂🧠💔"

- **Representational:** The brain (🧠) underscores cognitive effort, the broken heart (💔) symbolizes emotional struggle, and the laughter emoji (😂) lightens the tone, indicating self-deprecation.
- **Interactive:** Together, these emojis help the commenter connect with peers who fear math, building a jokey solidarity.
- **Compositional:** The sequence (laughter → brain → broken heart) tells a short story from humor, to effort, to heartbreak mirroring shared distaste yet resilience.

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Post: Student Spotlight – "Congrats to Fatima on scoring 90%!"
Comment 5:
"Congratulations Fatima! You've done us proud 🇵🇰🎉👏"

- **Representational:** The party popper (🎉) and clapping hands (👏) provide visual celebration; the Pakistani flag (🇵🇰) adds communal pride.
- **Interactive:** These emojis signal collective pride and positive alignment with both Fatima and the broader audience.
- **Compositional:** Emojis follow the congratulatory text, amplifying celebration and creating a layered, uplifting message in line with multimodal emphasis.

Post: "Live Q&A at 7 PM!" Reminder
Comment 6:
"I'll be there! 🔔👀 Excited!!!"

- **Representational:** The bell (🔔) denotes alert/attentiveness, and the eyes (👀) signal focused attention or curiosity.
- **Interactive:** These emojis reinforce the commenter's commitment and excitement, engaging with the page's persona.
- **Compositional:** Placed immediately after the promise ("I'll be there!"), the emojis function as visual confirmation, strengthening the reply's participatory effect.

Across these examples, emoji usage consistently aligns with Kress & van Leeuwen's multimodal triad:

These comment patterns reveal how student communities on Ulearn use a **coordinated semiotic system** to express engagement, support, humor, and shared identity especially in exam-related contexts. The interplay of text and visuals turns simple comments into meaningful multimodal acts that reinforce group cohesion, emotional expression, and educational support. By unpacking these layers, your analysis demonstrates how multimodal discourse shapes online educational interaction in real-world settings.

Let me know if you'd like to incorporate frequency analysis, code these examples in an Excel-ready table, or compare across the three pages you've sampled!

Conclusion

This study has explored how multimodal discourse specifically the interplay of text, emojis, and memes shapes user interaction on Pakistani educational Facebook pages. Guided by Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework of representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions, the research uncovered how students and other participants construct meaning, share emotions, and engage with educational narratives in highly visual and symbolic ways.

The comments analyzed across pages such as Teach For Pakistan, Ulearn, and EducationUSA Pakistan revealed that emojis and memes are not peripheral embellishments but integral semiotic tools. They perform complex communicative functions: enhancing clarity, softening critique, reinforcing solidarity, and embedding emotion into otherwise neutral digital text. Whether students were expressing joy over scholarships, stress about exams, or admiration for teachers, their use of multimodal resources reflected a shared communicative grammar one that resonates with youth digital culture and collective identity-building.

By mapping emotional tones, cultural references, and symbolic gestures through visual cues, commenters transform seemingly ordinary interactions into rich sites of discourse. The strategic positioning and sequencing of emojis consistently adhered to the compositional logic described by Kress and van Leeuwen, while interactive features such as affective alignment and call-response dynamics demonstrated a strong sense of community and peer engagement.

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In sum, this research affirms that Facebook comment sections on educational posts are dynamic multimodal arenas. Here, users co-create meaning not only through what they say but how they say it visually, emotionally, and socially. For educators, policymakers, and discourse analysts, these findings suggest that understanding online educational dialogue requires attention to the full spectrum of semiotic resources students deploy. Future research could expand this analysis with corpus linguistics, sentiment tracking, or cross-platform comparison to further explore the evolving role of multimodal discourse in digital education.

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