

The Semiotics of Psychological States in International Players' Face Expressions during Qatar World Cup 2022

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Date of Article</p> <p>Received : 2024/3/27</p> <p>Received in revised form: 2024/4/08</p> <p>Accepted: 2024/7/08</p> <p>Available online: 2024/9/30</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>football players, semiotics, World Cup, Facial expressions, Ekman, emotions</p>	<p>This study aims at applying the social semiotic theory of universal micro-expressions in international players' face expressions during Qatar World Cup 2022. The research analyzes four basic different facial expressions (sadness, happiness, anger and surprise) at the level of similarity and some other emotions at the level of difference. Relying on Ekman's model of semiotic micro-expressions of emotion, the findings of the data analysis show that the social semiotic approach is highly effective in showing how emotions in sports contexts can be revealed and indicated through facial expressions of players and how there are similarities and differences among them reflecting various motions.</p>

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1-Introduction

Sports context, including football in specific, witness different reactions and psychological states on the parts of players and even their fans. They could vary from happiness, anger to surprise and sadness, due to different reasons such as winning or failure. As such, the possibility that the human face reflects the feelings has been first proposed by Darwin (1872). It was further refined by psychologists and anthropologists (including Morris, Barthes, and Jacobson) who contended that fake facial expressions could be made.

They think that expressions on the face might be manipulated and misinterpreted, and "the issue was settled first by Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth pursued by some different researchers who demonstrated that facial expression can give exact information about feeling".

Accordingly, this study attempts to bridge the gap in the previous studies where semiotic microexpressions in sports contexts have not been adequately tackled. It is hypothesized that international football players have similarities

and differences in their use of face expressions as semiotic indicators of their emotions. As such, this study adopts the following procedures:

- 1- Reviewing literature on social semiotics and microexpressions,
- 2- Developing a model of analysis,
- 3- Selecting representative data to be scrutinized in the light of the model developed, depending on the qualitative method of analysis.

The first part of the research consists of concepts related to facial expressions gathered from the forerunners in the disciplines of anthropology and psychology; while the second part deals with recognition of emotional facial expressions of famous football players (during the World Cup in Qatar 2022) depending on the model that is presented by Paul Ekman (1992) with some amendments. The seven universal microexpression of faces are tackled and reviewed in some detail.

2. Literature Review

The fast growth of multimodal semiotics research is the driving force behind this study. The necessity for linguistic and semiotic studies to go beyond verbal language has long been acknowledged by linguists and social semioticians (Halliday & Hasan 1976; Hodge & Kress 1988; O'Halloran 1999; Martin 2001). Significant advances have been made in the field of visual analysis since the publication of the seminal work by Kress & van Leeuwen (1996), which focused on photographic images, and O'Toole's work (1994), which focused on paintings, architecture, and sculpture especially in "theoretical description and methods of analysis and enormous amount

of studies have begun to look beyond the verbal mode by investigating other modes that also contribute to the meaning-making process both individually and when combined with other modes".

Semiotics, according to Cobley and Jansz (1997), is the study of the sign system. Semiotics is formed from the Greek words "seme" (sign interpreter) and "semesion" (sign). Semiotics studies signs and their interpretations, as well as how they function. "The science of signs" is semiotics. Thus, semantic fields can be used to explain something's meaning (Eco, 1976, p.80). According to Saussure, semiotics is the study of how signals function in social life, as stated in the 2007 book *The Basic of Semiotic*. Words, images, gestures, noises, and objects can all be used as signs (Chandler, 2002).

According to Allen (2000), one of semiotics' achievements has been to draw attention to and provide a language to describe how symbol systems function, how they relate to one another, and how they affect how we comprehend the social and physical realities we live in. According to Leeds-Hurwitz (1993), semiotics aids in thinking about how meanings are created and transmitted. It has the potential to serve a significant support role in the study of communication.

According to Atkin (2010), Pierce regards every science as a study of semiotics. According to Allen (2000, p.5), semiotics is significant because it concentrates the person's attention and assists him in describing the interrelationships of symbol systems and their influence on how he interprets the physical and social environments in which he lives. According to Leeds-Hurwitz (1993, p. 12),

semiotics helps people comprehend meaning and how it is created and communicated. Furthermore, it plays an important function in communication.

Research studies in different academic spheres, such as Lemke's (1998a, 1998b, 2002) has focused on the concepts of hypermodality and multimedia. van Leeuwen (1999) on sound and music, O'Halloran (2004) discusses mathematical discourses, whereas Stenglin (2004) and Ravelli (2000) discuss three-dimensional space. Moreover, Martinec (2000, 2001, 2005) on movement and activity, the interactions between words, images, and sounds in web-based publications have been the subject of recent multimedia studies. One such study was conducted by Knox (2007), who looked at visual-verbal communication in online newspapers.

Three important approaches to multimodal semiotic study on microexpressions can be discerned in a large portion of the evaluated literature thus far. Ekman (1992) is a representative of the first method, which concentrated on facial expressions as a means of communication. The early writings of O'Toole (1994) and Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) contain the second strategy. "The challenge in the third approach is to take the total contribution of the combined systems of meaning into consideration, rather than adding up the singular contribution of each of the semiotic systems involved" (Knox 2007:25).

This study aims to examine the relationships between linguistic modes and gestures in football players' microexpressions, in keeping with current research to reflect the way the emergent emotional meaning and

psychological states are tailored via the interaction of those given modes.

Historically, with the publication of Charles Darwin's book "The Expressions of Emotions in Man and Animal" in 1872, the scientific study of facial expressions got underway. Darwin identified all common facial expressions as well as those that correspond with certain emotions in that book. He believed that some emotional expressions are normal and that everyone experiences them in the same way (Darwin 1872). Darwin saw expressions on faces which "reveal the thoughts and intentions of others more truly than do words, which may be falsified" (Darwin, 1998: 359). Additionally, he said that true feelings can surface despite efforts to conceal them, as he believed "the muscles of the face... are least obedient to the will". This can be true as If a person is unable to deliberately contract a muscle, s/he will also be unable to voluntarily suppress that muscle's contraction during an emotional outburst.

However, in the century that followed, his arguments were largely disregarded, and it became common knowledge that facial expressions are not accurate indicators of emotional state (Bruner and Tagiuri, 1954). The focus on commonly acknowledged facial expressions as providing a hint to internal sentiments were reexamined in the late 20th century after Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth (1972, 1982) resolved this dispute and proved that facial expressions may provide accurate information about emotion. They distinguished between posed and spontaneous facial expressions and showed that the former tended to convey the poser's intended meaning, "while spontaneous expression was predictable with

feelings proper in the circumstances that elicited these expressions" (p.78). Besides, their findings indicated that it was simple to differentiate between unpleasant and pleasant emotions; however, their evidence was weak when it came to complex emotions, such as those belonging to a specific class of emotions, such as anger and fear, or the intensity of a particular feeling, such as disturbance, outrage, fury, etc.

Nevertheless, since the 1970s, the hypothesis of Ekman and Friesen has dominated the area of emotion study. According to this idea, when an emotion arises, a series of electrical impulses that originate from the brain's emotion centers cause certain facial expressions as well as other modifications like elevated blood pressure or a change in heart rate.

Concerning the innateness of facial expressions, the idea that some facial expressions are shaped by intrinsic, biological elements is supported by a large body of research (Oster and Ekman, 1978). Allport (1924) similarly and previously contended that learning, which is highly likely to occur in all cultures, might lead to linkages between expressions and feelings.

3, Methodology and Model of Analysis

This work is conducted implementing a qualitative approach where the main aspects within each adopted theory are presented and applied to selected examples taken from the data of the study. The parts of the model are to be highlighted in the next subsections.

3.1 Emotions Expressed by the Face

Facial muscles can move spontaneously to convey a variety of emotions. Outrage, fear, surprise, disgust, grief, and so on are among

the emotions that may be conveyed by "the momentary configuration produced by the contraction... of facial muscles," according to Ekman (1992: 36). Additionally, he suggested that the way the face muscles move might reveal additional details regarding the nature and validity of an emotion.

Positive emotions, such as pride, joy, amusement, and so on, all exhibit the same facial expression—a particular type of smile—according to Ekman et al. (1990: 349). Which of these pleasant emotions is evident depends on the particular circumstances and environment.

What Ekman (1992: 35) refers to as the "unhappiness emotions, such as: disappointment, sadness, over loss, remorse, shame, and guilt" are another set of feelings that have a common expression. He also asserts that the expression of "the inner corners of the eyebrows are raised, the cheeks are slightly raised, and the lip corners downward" is similar to that of these sentiments. Like with happy sensations, identifying which of these unpleasant emotions is evident depends on the particulars of the scenario.

The emotions that do not manifest themselves in a prolonged or fleeting way make up the final category of emotions mentioned by Ekman (1992). However, when the observer encounters them, He provides them with no knowledge. However, the observer could infer the emotion from what is appropriate in a particular situation. The possibility of these "non-signal emotions" is something that even Ekman acknowledges. According to him, "there isn't yet any complete proof that such [emotions] do exist."

3.2 Microexpressions

"Microexpressions" are probably clues to emotions that are concealed. (They could also be signs of quickly absorbed, but hidden, emotional states.) Most people are unable to observe or recall these emotions on a regular basis because they occur so quickly. How this occurs is suggested by research on the neuroanatomical foundations of emotional articulations. Two neuronal pathways, each starting in a distinct part of the brain, intervene between external appearances (Rinn, 1984). The extrapyramidal tract, which originates in subcortical brain regions, drives involuntary emotional expressions, whereas the pyramidal tract, which drives voluntary facial motions, originates in the cortical motor strip. People engage in a neurological "tug of war" over control of their expressions when they are in highly emotional situations and need to manage their emotions. This involves activating both systems.

About a century after Darwin, Haggard and Isaacs (1966) used slow-motion video of psychotherapy sessions to prove the existence of microexpressions. Subsequently, microexpressions were found in their frame-by-frame analysis of encounters with depressed inpatients, according to Ekman and Friesen (1974). Porter and Ten Brinke (2008) demonstrated recently that participants intentionally tried to be dishonest in their emotional display, which resulted in microexpressions.

3.3 The Seven Universal Microexpressions and Psychological States

Ekman (1992) confirmed that there are seven universal features to microexpressions, which they are:

1-Sadness

- "Inner corners of the eyebrows are drawn up and in"
- "Skin below eyebrow triangulated, with inner corner up"

- "Corner of the lips are drawn down"

"Jaw comes up"

- "Lower lip pouts out "

2-Happiness

- "Corners of the lips are drawn back and up"
- "Mouth may or may not be parted, teeth exposed"
- "A wrinkle runs from outer nose to outer lip"
- "Cheeks are raised"
- "Lower lid may show wrinkles or be tense"
- "Crows feet near the outside of the eyes"

3- Anger

- "The brows are lowered and drawn together"
- "Vertical lines appear between the brows"
- "Lower lid is tensed"
- "Eyes hard stare or bulging"
- "Lips can be pressed firmly together with corners down or square shape as if shouting"
- "Nostrils may be dilated"
- "The lower jaw juts out"

4-Disgust

- "Upper lip is raised"
- "Lower lip is raised"
- "Lines show below the lower lid"

5- Fear

- "Brows are raised and drawn together, usually in a flat line"
- "Wrinkles in the forehead are in the center between the brows, not across"

- "Mouth is open and lips are slightly tensed or stretched and drawn back"

6- Surprise

- "The brows are raised and curved"
- "Skin below the brow is stretched"
- "Horizontal wrinkles across the forehead"
- "Eyelids are opened, whites of the eye showing above and below"
- "Jaw drops open and teeth are parted but there is not tension or stretching of the mouth"

7- Contempt

Contempt is the simplest microexpression:

- "One side of the mouth raises"

4. Data Analysis and Results

In this section, the researcher applies the rules of four essential universal microexpressions (sadness, happiness, fear and anger expression) on selected faces of three famous players (L. Messi, C. Ronaldo, and [Kylian Mbappé](#)).

4.1 Similarities

Here, similarities between players are explained.



Fig. (1). Sad Microexpression

As indicated in the pictures, both players successfully indicated the emotion and psychological state of sadness. They show the emotion of sadness which has been hypothesized earlier in this paper. It can be seen that both players share common features in expressing this emotion. Sadness is clearly indicated and reflected through face expressions, and this result disagrees with what was previously suggested by Carroll and Russell (1997: 165) who argue that patterns of facial expressions arise only secondarily, through the coincidental co-occurrence of two or more different components. In many contexts, "happiness is represented by smiles in 97% of cases, surprise, anger, disgust or sadness rarely show the predicted pattern of facial expression (found in 0 to 31% of cases" (Carroll and Russell, 1997).



Fig. (2). Anger Microexpression

Figure (2) shows the anger emotion reflected by the psychological states of the two players L. Messi and Mbappe where both of them represent the anger microexpression hypothesis. Both of them share the same eye staring. Moreover, they show the same eyebrows position.

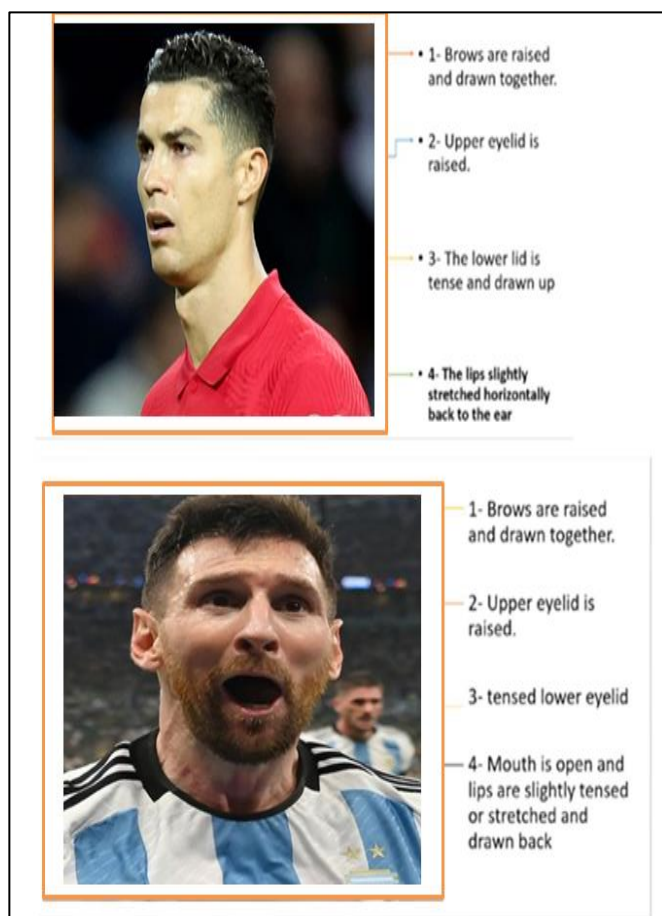


Fig. (3). Surprise Microexpression.

Both Ronaldo and Messi apparently represent surprise psychological state incorporating four marks using his eyebrows, eyes, and lips. Players reflect their surprise to express their rejection of some referees' decisions or not achieving their goals in fatal moments in the game.



Fig. (4). Happiness Microexpression

The two players reveal four marks of happiness hypothesis which is the wrinkle on the lids and cheek and the narrowness of eyes and eyebrows. Ronaldo was recorded as being happy by many media stations and channels. Cristiano Ronaldo said he was living a "beautiful moment" after becoming the first player to score in five men's World Cups as he helped Portugal to a 3-2 victory over Ghana on Thursday, November 24 (Friday, November 25, Manila time) at the start of their campaign in Qatar.

4.2 Differences

Here, this section will concentrate on what characterizes each player. It is revealed that C.

Ronaldo was characterized by the manipulation of complex psychological states through the semiotic marks and expressions he employed. He mixed very complex emotions of fear, surprise and contempt in several situation that reflect the complexity of disappointment, sadness or happiness and surprise at the same time. Such emotions are represented in Fig. (5) below:

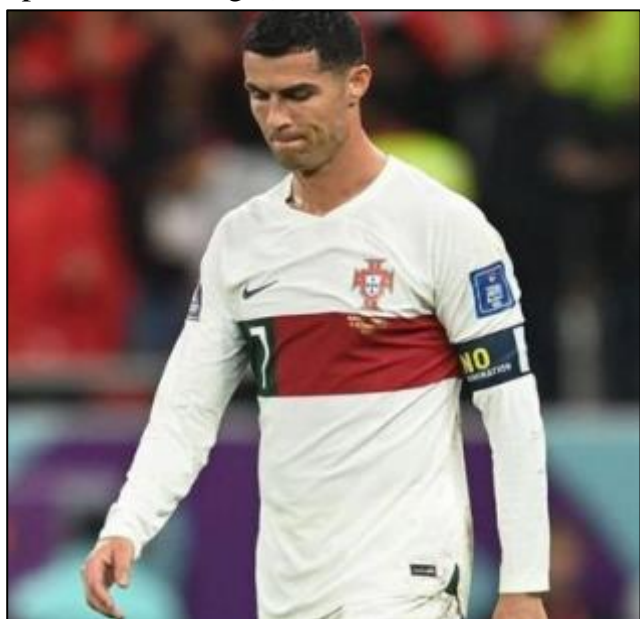


Fig. (5). Complex Microexpressions of C. Ronaldo

In the first picture of Fig. (5), Ronaldo's movements and expressions are represented by

lowering his bows, tightly closing mouth and looking at the ground (reflecting sadness, anger, disappointment or even shyness); in the second picture, he tightly closed his mouth raising it upward, pointing to the ground with finger and severely dark eyes (reflecting victory, revenge and power in the game, or even insistence: this is my game). All these semiotic expressions are utilized to complicatedly reflect multiple emotions. He elicited the conditions of the event to successfully express his psychological states.

On the other hand, Messi was highly successful in his unique expressions and movements of rejection and happiness relying on more spotlighted tools such as opening mouth in a rounded way to express his loss (surprise and sadness at the same time) in a way different from Ronaldo who closed his mouth tightly in such a situation. Even his eyes are glaring but lost at the same time as in picture one of Fig. (6) below, and opening his mouth with his hand showing teeth and tongue and looking down with eyes. to mock others in picture two of Fig. (6) as well.





Fig. (6). Different Expressions of Messi

5. Conclusions

Very helpful indicators of hidden emotions are facial expressions. In some cases, they might be useful for those conducting interviews. They also offer knowledge that is very helpful for relationship, family, and the job. The current study looks at three international football players' expressions of emotions via facial expressions (L. Messi, C. Ronaldo and K. Mbappe) depending on the model proposed by Paul Ekman (1992). The study has found out that the four universal microexpression (anger, surprise, happiness and sadness) were clearly reflected by those players. The findings demonstrate that they show major similarities of emotional marks in all the analyzed psychological states in addition to slight differences. Besides, the study revealed the importance of lips, eyes and eyebrows in showing the true emotions. The findings of the study also demonstrated that the social semiotic approach is highly effective in showing how emotions in sport contexts can be reflected through facial expressions of players and how there are similarities and differences

among the players who represent different world cultures.

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سيمائية الحالات النفسية في تعابير وجوه اللاعبين الدوليين
خلال مونديال قطر 2022

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تطبيق النظرية السيميائية الاجتماعية للتعبير الدقيقة العالمية على تعبيرات وجوه اللاعبين الدوليين خلال مونديال قطر 2022. وقد قام البحث بتحليل أربعة تعبيرات وجهية أساسية مختلفة (الحزن، السعادة، الغضب، المفاجأة) على مستوى التشابه والمفاجأة. وبعض المشاعر الأخرى على مستوى الاختلاف. وباعتماد على نموذج إيكمان للتعبيرات الجزئية السيميائية للعاطفة، أظهرت نتائج تحليل البيانات أن النهج السيميائي الاجتماعي فعال للغاية في الكشف عن العواطف في السياقات الرياضية والإشارة إليها من خلال تعبيرات وجه اللاعبين وكيف توجد أوجه تشابه واختلافات الاختلافات بينهما تعكس الثقافات المختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: لاعبو كرة قدم، السيميائية، كأس العالم، تعابير الوجه، الانفعالات.