

The Effect of Emoji Use on Recipients' Emotion Regulation under Social Media

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ABSTRACT

As society continues to develop and evolve, emojis are increasingly replacing certain expressions traditionally conveyed through plain text. This paper transitions from examining the impact of plain text on the receiver to analyzing how the inclusion of emojis in text regulates the receiver's emotions. The findings of this research not only enhance our understanding and utilization of emojis but also open new avenues for exploration in psychology and behavioral studies.

KEYWORDS

Emoji; Emotional Regulation; Social Media.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving world, the Internet industry has emerged as a dominant force. An increasing number of individuals are opting to use electronic devices for both work and entertainment, facilitating interpersonal communication. As a result, the Internet era has gradually supplanted the age of traditional letter writing. With more people choosing online platforms to connect with others, Internet communication has become an essential aspect of daily life. Additionally, many individuals are incorporating emojis into their chats to convey their emotions, both directly and indirectly.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. Definition of Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is the process of enhancing adaptive emotional responses through various strategies aimed at modifying the intensity, duration, and nature of emotions [1]. Humans are a species that experience emotions constantly, and similar or different stimuli can easily evoke a range of feelings (e.g., happiness, excitement, sadness, fear, anger) either directly or indirectly. Consequently, effective emotion regulation is essential for maintaining mental health [2]. Failure to regulate emotions can lead to conditions such as depression, anxiety, and distraction, which in turn further affect pro-social behavior. Negative emotions can result in issues such as impulsive aggressive behavior or negative avoidance behavior, both psychologically and physiologically, which can induce fluctuating emotions and increase pro-social behaviors [3-6]. These behaviors represent overall positive perceptions or orientations towards the past, present, and future [2].

2.2. Definition and Role of Emojis

Since people are often unable to communicate face-to-face, emojis are frequently used in online interactions as a substitute for in-person communication. Currently, approximately 3 billion people utilize emojis. From the Global Language Monitor's Word of the Year [❤️] in 2014 to the Oxford Word of the Year [Figure1] in 2015, it is evident that emoji have become an integral party of people's communication, and can even be considered a unique “global language”. [7]. “Emoji” comes from Japanese -- pictograms [emodzi], in which picture [e] indicates a drawing, and character [modzi] indicates a character. It is a type of textual expression that contains people's inner emotions, albeit it an informal manner. They can effectively enhance the emotional depth of otherwise flat text.

In this study, a comparative analysis is conducted between plain text and text enhanced with the addition of emoji to investigate whether people's emotions (the dependent variable) are adjusted according to the addition of emoji (the independent variable). With this in mind, it also investigates whether the same emoji used in the same sentence under different interpersonal relationships has the same effect of shifting emotions.

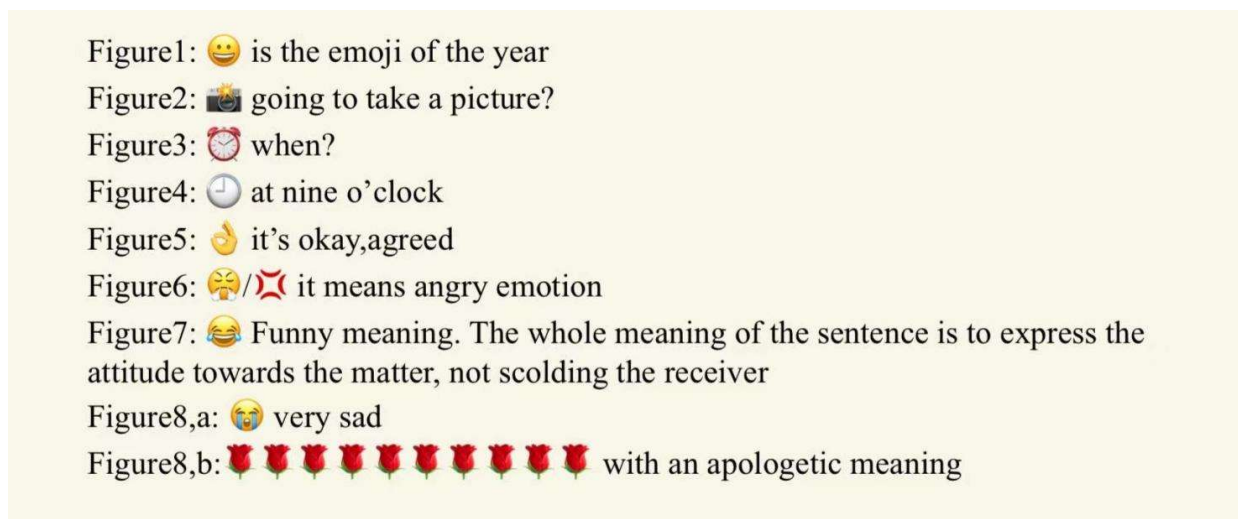


Figure 1. “Emoji”

2.3. Research Significance

Recalling that most research articles analyze the role of emojis in expressing emotions and their impact on individual feelings. However, few studies have demonstrated that texts enhanced with the addition of emojis can go on to regulate people's emotions. This research not only enriches our understanding of emojis as tools for emotional communication tool, but also has important theoretical and practical implications for optimizing interpersonal communication and enhancing social media experience and art cells [8]. Because this study is interconnected with psychology and behavior it is possible to know more about the psychological states of both the sender and receiver through the emoji expression. This can provide more new perspectives and data analysis for psychological and behavioral research.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Negative Emotions Induced by Plain Text on Social Media

In traditional communication, the spatial orientation of face-to-face interactions is often sufficient to evoke a specific “social mode” of neurocognitive processing during human social interactions,

regardless of the visibility of visual body signals [9]. However, in today's rapidly developing online landscape, most people communicate through digital platforms (e.g., WeChat, QQ, Weibo and Jieyin, etc.). When a sender transmits plain text, it will have a shift in the mindset of the receiver. This is because it is not possible to determine what the sender is trying to mean by people's facial expressions and specific speaking sequences or intonations. This is due to the lack of social cues from the audience, and the ambiguity of online text communication often leads to misunderstandings, which can cause negative emotions in the sender of the message [10]. So it leads to the fact that people will take a longer time to understand the plain text and a longer time to read the text, which may cause the receiver to over-understand the sender's text or directly misinterpret the meaning of the text, which directly affects people's emotions.

3.2. Emoji Directly Affect Our Emotions

Emoji not only contain non-verbal cues but also non-facial emoji (non-facial Emoji), which allows people to feel the sender's emotions in time in online chatting [11]. Therefore, the use of Emojis can guide the receiver to adopt similar emotional expression strategies when replying to messages and facilitate interaction [12]. As an example, when two good friends are chatting and they want to take a picture together, they use emoji to express their thoughts and emotions. Female 1: "Figure2" , Female 2: "!!, Figure3" (from which we can see that Female 2's emotions are high, ! -- meaning excited) Woman 1: "Figure4" , Woman 2: "Figure5". This process is expressed with emoji, and this kind of is an epiphenomenal conscious process [13]. Secondly, the use of emojis alone can be immersive. This is because of the unique position of facial Emoji in visual working memory and their tight connection with human faces in cognitive processing [14]. For example, when people send a message inside their family group and a family member sends an angry emoji or emoticon (Figure6) on it. People then develop a sense of oppression, which is an implicit process [15]. The analysis of scholar Van Kleef's "emotions as social information model- EA SI), can be analyzed from the affective response and influence through textual reasoning and analysis. Also, the emoticon angry (Figure6) is easily associated with many related things and is related to family closeness and adjustment [15]. So people automatically associate or bring in their own identity in this scenario, which directly affects our mood and emotions.

4. INCORPORATING EMOJI'S SHIFT IN MOOD

In the past, text-based communication induced negative emotions in the receiver due to the text sent by the other party. And since emoji can improve our negative emotions. Therefore, it is proposed that incorporating emojis into negative text can regulate the receiver's negative emotions.

In the long history of emojis development, it can be observed in daily life that people do not only send simple text but also put emojis or emojis at different places in the text to further express their emotions, attitudes or the current state of affairs. Kayeet points out that emoji have two main functions in text [16]: (i) depicting emotions or social intentions, and (ii) reducing potential discourse ambiguity. Intentions. So the use of Emojis can be transformative to people's minds, bodies, thinking, and emotions. For example, when a person mentions something in a conversation and the other person replies with the phrase "Crazy" when the receiver sees the message, he or she is angry or puzzled. When the receiver sees the message, he or she is angry or confused. But when the other party adds an emojis to the sentence, it adjusts the meaning or expression of the whole sentence. When the sender changes it to, "Nuts, Figure7", when the receiver sees the text with the emoji, the emotion will change from annoyance to pleasure and other emotions. (Because it shows the sender's responsive attitude towards the matter, and just meets the expectation the receiver wants to achieve and the content of the reply, it will make the receiver's mood shift in a short time). According to relevant studies, emojis are most often used at the end of sentences for utterance modification, reflecting the intention to use them for content organization or visual enhancement [17]. It is the combination of Emojis and text

that conveys a more complete meaning and helps to improve the clarity and deepen the credibility of text reading [18].

The use of Emoji with text connects the emotions and feelings of the receiver and the sender. It supplements the visual cues that are lacking in online communication, and makes the interaction between the two parties closer to face-to-face communication, enabling a better exchange of views and emotions between the communicating parties [19]. Both parties are able to use emoji as a form of humor and to ease the awkward atmosphere. For example, a pair of strangers are chatting in the comment section on the Internet, and one person's words unconsciously hurt the receiver, who rebutted his point of view below. But when the sender posts at the end of the post, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry "Figure8,a and Figure8,b". It is also because the meaning of "Figure8,a" is ingrained in people's memories [20]. Plus the phrase coupled with two different emoji to express the sender's sincerest apology can make the receiver actually feel the sender's intention, which reduces the irritation.

In addition, the addition of emoji followed by the article stimulates the human brain nerves to focus more on communication and promotes emotions between the parties in order to help them perceive the information themselves and choose more clearly the appropriate response [21]. It is because both spatial orientation and binary visibility independently affect the interlocutor's ability to establish a shared attentional state facilitating neural processing in the brain leading to responding with the same emotion [9].

5. CONCLUSION

In today's rapidly evolving zeitgeist, people's use of emoji has become more diverse. When people are in the process of chatting with each other, it lacks the visual effect of the audience if they only see plain text. This leads to a negative impact, but we also learned that the use of emoji alone can regulate the receiver's mood to a certain extent, so our research found that the text with the addition of emoji is more able to regulate the receiver's mood. It allows the receiver to feel the intention of the sender, and to focus more on the communication so as to choose an appropriate response.

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