

The Use of Emojis in Language Communication on Social Media Platforms

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ABSTRACT

Emojis have become crucial in digital communication, enhancing emotional expression and clarity on social media. However, discrepancies exist in how emojis are interpreted across different cultural and contextual settings. This study aims to explore emoji usage and interpretation among university students in English Language Education Study Program at Universitas Nias. For participant selection, an approach focusing on the phenomenon was employed because they were considered to provide relevant or significant insights into the research. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research examines how emojis influence message meaning and clarity. Findings reveal that while emojis significantly enhance emotional nuance and expressiveness, their interpretation varies widely based on context and cultural background. This can lead to misunderstandings if emojis are not used appropriately. The study highlights the importance of understanding cultural and contextual nuances to ensure effective communication. Conclusively, while emojis enrich digital interactions, users must be mindful of their context-aware and culturally informed usage to maximize clarity and minimize misinterpretations.

Keywords: Emojis, Language communication, Social media.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, the use of emojis has become an integral part of everyday online communication and interactions on social media platforms. The development of communication technology and the growth of internet use drive the popularity of emojis. The rapid growth in the use of emojis since they were first introduced in the late 1990s transcends the boundaries of written language and becomes a global language. According to Evans (2022), emojis evolve into an important element in digital communication that allows users to convey emotions and meaning in a more visual and direct way. Since then, emojis become one of the main features of various social media platforms. Evans highlights different types of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, each of which has a unique way of integrating emojis to increase user engagement. Facebook and Instagram, for example, allow the use of emojis in comments and messages, while Twitter often uses emojis in tweets to increase engagement. WhatsApp, on the other hand, offers emojis as an integral part of instant messaging, allowing for more expressive and dynamic conversations.

In this day when expressive messages are highly valued, the use of emojis allows users to convey emotional nuances quickly and clearly. From a semiotic and linguistic perspective, emojis can be categorized as symbols because they are used to represent socially agreed ideas, emotions, or concepts. Emojis facilitate understanding and add an additional layer of meaning to written text, serving as visual markers that enrich digital interactions. In 2019, Seargeant

explores the evolving landscape of digital interactions, highlighting how emojis become an essential component of text communication. He argues that emoji function as symbols that not only mediating but also enriching written text, providing visual cues that convey emotions and contextual nuances.

That same year, McCulloch categorizes emojis as a visual tool that has fundamentally changed the way to communicate online. He emphasizes their role in adding layers of meaning and emotional context to digital messages, effectively bridging the gap between written text and the non-verbal cues present in face-to-face communication. Seargeant and McCulloch's (2019) work emphasizes the significant influence of emojis in shaping the future of communication, highlighting their function as symbols that enhance the clarity and expressivity of language in the digital age.

In the context of language teaching and learning, the use of emojis has been explored as a pedagogical tool to enhance engagement and comprehension. According to Danesi (2016), emojis can serve as a bridge between visual and textual literacy, making language learning more accessible and enjoyable. They can help illustrate linguistic concepts, provide context for vocabulary, and support the development of emotional intelligence and cultural understanding in language learners. Additionally, Kelly (2019) suggests that emojis can be used to aid in the teaching of pragmatics and sociolinguistics, helping students understand the nuances of tone, formality, and context in communication. By integrating emojis into language lessons, educators can create a more interactive and relatable learning environment, which can be particularly beneficial in teaching digital literacy and communication skills.

Although emojis are originally designed as a way to express emotions in text, their use grows to become more complex and extensive. The main problem that arises is misinterpretation, where emojis can be understood differently by different people, especially when the context is unclear. Apart from that, there are also concerns about the clarity and effectiveness of language communication containing emojis on social media platforms as well as the meaning of words or sentences in messages. Additional issues include the overuse of emojis, which can dilute their intended meaning, and the inconsistency of emojis representation across different devices and platforms, leading to further confusion. In recent research conducted by Lee and Park (2021), it is found that differences in culture and context often lead to misinterpretation of emojis, which can affect the effectiveness of digital communication. This is especially relevant in interactions among university students. For this research, researchers focus on students in the English Language Education Study program. McWhorter, an expert in linguistics and communication, notes that emojis have become a new form of digital body language that requires context and familiarity for accurate interpretation. The evolving nature of emojis also means that new ones are continually being introduced, which can create a gap in understanding among different user demographics. This study aims to understand how users understand, interpret, and perceive the clarity and effectiveness of language communication using emojis on social media platforms, and how the meaning of words and sentence structure in messages that use emojis.

Previous research studies provide valuable insights into the use of emojis in language communication on social media platforms. One of them is a study by Erle, Thorsten M., et al. (2021) entitled "Emojis as Social Information in Digital Communication" that investigates how emojis are used as social information in digital communication. The results of Erle et al.'s research indicate that emojis play a crucial role in conveying social and emotional information, enhancing the richness and depth of digital conversations. However, the study also highlights that emojis can lead to misunderstandings, particularly when interpreted differently by the sender and receiver based on personal or cultural contexts. These findings underline the necessity of further research into the clarity and effectiveness of language communication using emojis. The novelty of the proposed research lies in its focus on understanding, meaning, and clarity of messages conveyed through emojis, particularly among university students. By identifying patterns in emojis interpretation and potential misunderstandings, this research

aims to build on previous studies and provide deeper insights into digital communication dynamics.

To further explore this phenomenon, the researchers raise a research title "The Use of Emoji in Language Communication on Social Media Platforms" which can provide valuable insights. Such studies can include an analysis of how the clarity of the message conveyed in terms of the meaning of words or sentences from the use of emojis can be understood, as well as how emojis are used in certain communication contexts, such as informal versus professional conversations. According to Miller (2023), understanding the use of emojis in different contexts can reveal new dynamics in digital communication. Thus, through this approach, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the role of emojis used in language communication in today's digital era. In addition, this research can explore how emojis influence individual perceptions and emotions as well as their social interactions.

Review of Literature

Introduction to Emojis

Emojis are small digital images or icons used to express an idea, emotion, or concept in electronic communication. Originating from the combination of the Japanese words "e" (絵, "picture") and "moji" (文字, "character"), emojis have become a ubiquitous part of modern digital communication. They are standardized across different platforms and devices through their inclusion in the Unicode Standard, allowing for consistent use and interpretation globally.

Experts' views on emojis have been the subject of interesting research in recent years. One renowned researcher, Evans (2017) has outlined how emojis are not only a means of communication, but also an important expression of emotion in digital culture. In his research, Evans discusses the ways in which emojis are used to enrich and strengthen message text, allowing users to convey emotional nuances that are difficult to convey through words.

A more analytical approach to the use of emojis in online communication was taken by Schnoebelen (2014) a researcher who previously worked at Google. Through his linguistic analysis, Schnoebelen provides insight into how emojis are used, interpreted, and how they influence the dynamics of online conversations. In addition, design views and visualization of emojis were also provided by Weissman (2013) a designer and illustrator. Weissman explores how emoji design influences users' perceptions and interpretations in the context of digital communication.

History of emojis, the first emoji originated in Japan (Late 1990s) by Shigetaka Kurita (1999). Shigetaka Kurita, working for NTT DoCoMo, created the first set of 176 12x12 pixel emojis to enhance communication on the i-mode mobile internet platform. These early emojis included basic expressions, weather symbols, and common objects Stark, L. (2019). Later Adoption and Standardization in the 2000s, through Mobile Phone Integration, emojis quickly gained popularity in Japan as major mobile operators incorporated them into their messaging services, leading to widespread use among Japanese mobile phone users. And through the Unicode Standard (2010), the Unicode Consortium stated the integration of emojis into Unicode 6.0 in October 2010, emphasizing its crucial role in enabling consistent usage across different devices and operating systems. This standardization marked the beginning of global adoption of emoji, Goldman, J. (2015).

Popularity (2010s) through Social Media and Messaging Apps, the rise of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, along with messaging apps like WhatsApp, greatly increased the use of emojis worldwide. These platforms integrated emoji into their interfaces, making them more accessible Sampietro, A. (2016). Later through Apple and Android Support: Apple's inclusion of an official emoji keyboard in its iOS 5 update in 2011 was crucial in popularizing emoji outside of Japan. Android soon followed, making emoji an integral part of mobile communication Parkinson, HJ (2017).

Evans (2017) identifies various types of emoji used in digital communication. One of them is the face emoji, which includes emotional expressions such as smiling, crying, and

surprise. This emoji is a way for users to convey feelings in text messages. Apart from that, Crystal (2015) adds that there are object emojis that represent various things such as food, drinks, objects and activities. This emoji is used to express desires, daily activities, or even represent physical objects that are relevant to the context of the conversation. Danesi (2016) also identifies symbolic emojis as an important part of emoji classification, including various signs and symbols such as stars, hearts, and arrows. They are used to convey abstract ideas, concepts, or messages in digital communications. Furthermore, according to Novak et al. (2015), animal and nature emojis have also become an important part of digital communication. They include various animals, plants, and natural elements such as flowers, trees, and weather. These emojis are used to add variety to digital communication and convey information about the environment or daily activities.

The Placement of Emojis in Sentences and the Correctness of their Use in Linguistics

Emojis often have their meaning expanded from their original meaning. The smiling face emoji, for example, not only conveys happiness or a positive attitude but also pragmatic meanings such as sincerity, mitigation, and politeness (Dresner & Herring, 2010). The use of emojis in digital communications allows for richer and more varied expressions than text alone. Emojis can enhance or change the meaning of the sentences they accompany, adding layers of interpretation that may go undetected in conventional written text.

The placement of emojis in sentences plays an important role in how they are understood. Emojis can be placed at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence to add nuance or clarify meaning. This placement must take into account the fluency and clarity of the sentence. Evans (2017) explains that the placement of emojis in sentences can influence their syntactic and pragmatic functions. Emojis placed at the end of a sentence are often used to emphasize or change the emotional tone of the preceding text. When used in sentences, they can serve as visual punctuation or provide additional context to certain words or phrases. Erker and Wassink (2016) add that emojis placed at the end of sentences are often used to provide clarity and emotional nuance, while emojis within sentences can interrupt the flow of text to add emphasis or convey certain emotions associated with the words certain.

Emojis are also more flexible in terms of distribution than emoticons. They often appear in groups and rarely at the end of sentences (Novak et al., 2015). Research done by Ganster et al. (2012) indicates that emojis have a more substantial impact than emoticons on readers' perceptions of the author's mood and commitment. Additionally, social media users rate emojis as more useful, interesting, fun, easy, and informal than emoticons (Prada et al., 2018).

In terms of functionality, emojis are often used to complement written text by adding emotional nuance or context that may not be sufficient to explain with words alone (Danesi, 2016). They function like body language or facial expressions in face-to-face communication, allowing writers to convey additional emotions and context that cannot be fully explained with text. Barbieri et al. (2016) state that the interpretation of emojis is highly dependent on the context in which they are used, including factors such as culture, conversational situation, and the relationship between communicators.

The use of emojis in digital communication is also considered a natural evolution of language in the technological era. Schnoebelen (2011) points out that emojis play an important role in enhancing technological communication, replacing nonverbal communication elements that are usually present in face-to-face communication. Emojis can replace words and provide minimal information faster than writing (Novak et al., 2015). If a sentence consists of only one emoji, it can be used to replace a word, as a notifier, or simply to indicate a certain emotional state.

From a linguistic perspective, emoji use has become an interesting research topic. Linguistic experts consider emojis to be part of the evolving modern digital language. Although unconventional, the use of emojis is thought to enrich written communication by providing an additional way to express emotion and non-verbal meaning. Research shows that emojis can increase understanding and engagement in digital communications, although

their use needs to be adapted to the context and audience to avoid misunderstandings. In this case, the use of emojis in linguistics is not only justified, but is also seen as a natural evolution of language in the digital era.

In a linguistic context, the use of emojis in sentence structures can be justified if they add value to the communication and help convey the message more clearly or in a relevant context. Dresner & Herring (2010) argue that emoticons (including emoji) can function as pragmatic signs that reinforce or modulate the meaning of a sentence, conveying authorial intentions such as sarcasm or humor that may not be obvious in plain written text. The use of emojis as nonverbal tools that complement text, provides emotional nuance, and enhance the relevance of messages depends largely on social norms and cultural habits within a particular communication community.

Emojis as Linguistic Elements

Crystal (2015) discusses the linguistic creativity enabled by emojis, highlighting how they allow users to play with language and invent new forms of expression. He examines how emojis are used not just for emotional expression but also for creating puns, jokes, and other forms of linguistic play in digital communication.

Emojis, despite their visual nature, serve as integral linguistic elements in digital communication. Just as words carry meaning and convey messages, emojis play a crucial role in enriching and enhancing textual content. According to Evans (2017), linguistic studies have delved into the semantic and pragmatic functions of emojis, treating them as meaningful components of language. For instance, researchers have analyzed how emojis can replace or complement words to convey emotions, actions, and ideas more effectively. They have also explored the syntactic rules governing emoji usage, such as their placement within sentences and their ability to modify the meaning of adjacent words.

Moreover, emojis exhibit characteristics of linguistic symbols, as they represent socially agreed-upon concepts and meanings. Just like words in a language, emojis possess denotative and connotative meanings that users understand based on shared cultural and contextual knowledge. Evans (2017) further emphasizes that emojis can convey nuanced emotions and attitudes that may be challenging to express through words alone, highlighting their communicative versatility. Additionally, understanding emojis as linguistic elements involves recognizing their role in shaping digital discourse and their contribution to the complexity and richness of language in online interactions.

Non-verbal Communication in Digital Contexts

Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the foundation of human interaction. Verbal communication refers to the use of words in written or spoken forms to convey messages. According to Adler, Rodman, and du Pré (2019), verbal communication is the primary means by which people share thoughts, ideas, and feelings. This includes direct conversations, writing, and all forms of expression involving language. Conversely, non-verbal communication encompasses all cues that do not use words, such as facial expressions, body language, and, in the digital context, the use of emoticons, emojis, GIFs, and memes (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2016).

In today's digital era, non-verbal communication has undergone a significant transformation with the advent of tools like emojis and GIFs. Derks, Bos, & von Grumbkow (2021) show that the use of emojis in text conversations can enhance intimacy and social relationships between users, reduce psychological distance, and improve understanding. This aligns with Zega's et al., (2023) theory, which states that effective interaction is key to the success of the learning process. In the classroom context, good interaction between teachers and students, involving both verbal and non-verbal communication, ensures that learning proceeds smoothly and information is clearly received. Similarly, in the digital context, effective interaction, facilitated by the use of non-verbal cues like emojis and GIFs, plays a crucial role in ensuring that communication is clear and relationships are strengthened.

Furthermore, Kalman&Gergle (2022) note that the use of emojis can rectify misunderstandings in digital communication by adding an emotional layer that helps convey the true intent of the message. Thus, it is concluded that both in the digital context and in direct interaction, effective communication relies heavily on the appropriate use of non-verbal cues. The use of emojis in digital communication enriches interactions and enhances understanding. Both contexts emphasize that effective interaction is crucial for the successful transmission and reception of information.

Platform-specific Emoji Usage

Today, social media has become an intriguing and integral part of daily human life. Kaplan and Haenlein (2016) categorize social media into several types, including social networking sites (such as Facebook and LinkedIn), media-sharing platforms (such as YouTube and Instagram), and collaborative projects (such as Wikipedia). Additionally, Statista (2021) classified social media based on the type of content shared, such as video-sharing platforms (YouTube, TikTok), photo-sharing platforms (Instagram, Pinterest), and microblogging platforms (Twitter, Tumblr).

Riordan (2017) examines how emojis are used differently on various social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. She finds that the context and norms of each platform influence emoji usage patterns, with certain emojis being more popular or carrying different connotations on specific platforms. Gawne and McCulloch (2019) also explore the pragmatic functions of emojis in messaging apps like WhatsApp and WeChat. They discuss how users adapt their emoji usage based on the platform's features and cultural context, with certain emojis becoming more prevalent or acquiring specific meanings within those apps. Miller and colleagues (2016) investigate how emojis are interpreted differently across various platforms, such as iOS, Android, and Windows. They found significant variations in how users perceive the same emoji due to differences in design, which can lead to misunderstandings in communication.

Similarly, Gawne and McCulloch explore how users adapt their emojis usage based on the features and cultural contexts of messaging apps like WhatsApp and WeChat, leading to the emergence of platform-specific emoji meanings and prevalence. Furthermore, Miller and her colleagues underscore the impact of design variations across operating systems like iOS, Android, and Windows, which can lead to differing perceptions and potential misunderstandings when interpreting the same emoji. Collectively, these studies emphasize the importance of considering the specific platform, its norms, features, and design choices when analyzing and understanding emoji usage and interpretation, as these contextual factors play a crucial role in shaping the pragmatic functions and connotations of emojis in digital communication.

METHOD

The qualitative research approach to be adopted in this study of "The Use of Emojis in Language Communication on Social Media Platforms" aims to delve into how users interpret and utilize emojis in their digital interactions. According to Taylor et al. (2016), qualitative researchers prioritize understanding the meanings individuals attach to their experiences and surroundings. This approach is inherently inductive, allowing researchers to gather insights organically rather than testing predefined hypotheses. Researchers in this field adopt a holistic perspective, examining people and settings as integrated wholes rather than breaking them down into isolated variables. Researchers focus on everyday life, exploring how people think and act in their natural environments. Valuing all perspectives, qualitative researchers believe every setting and group offers valuable insights. Emphasizing the significance and relevance of their studies, they treat qualitative research as a craft, requiring skill and sensitivity to capture the complexities of human experience.

This method is selected due to its focus on comprehending the significance individuals attribute to their experiences, particularly in the context of communication on social media platforms. By employing qualitative research, the study seeks to uncover nuanced insights into the usage and interpretation of emojis in digital communication, offering a deeper understanding of their role and impact in this evolving landscape.

In qualitative research, the numbers and types of approaches have also become more clearly visible during the 1990s and into the 21st century. For this study, the phenomenological research design will be chosen based on the principles outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), Phenomenology, originating from philosophy and psychology, seeks to capture the lived experiences of individuals regarding a particular phenomenon as articulated by participants. This approach aims to uncover the essence of experiences shared by multiple individuals who have encountered the phenomenon. By adopting phenomenology, this study will delve into how users perceive and utilize emojis in their digital interactions, aiming to reveal the underlying meanings and interpretations attributed to these symbols within the realm of language communication on social media platforms.

Respondents

The research was conducted at Universitas Nias, specifically within the English Education Study Program, providing an environment tailored to the study's objectives and facilitating access to relevant data sources and academic support. In this study, the participants were 14 students in the eighth semester of English Education Study Program at Universitas Nias. For participant selection, an approach focusing on the phenomenon was employed. This method involved deliberately selecting participants or sites (or documents or visual materials) because they were considered to provide relevant or significant insights into the research, as described by Creswell (2018).

Instruments

In qualitative research, various types of data collection methods are utilized to gather comprehensive insights from the research setting. According to Creswell (2018), these methods include qualitative observation, interviews, document analysis, and audiovisual or digital materials.

1. Digital Text

Researchers collect qualitative documents or digital text during the research process, which can be public (e.g., newspapers, official reports) or private (e.g., personal journals, letters). These documents provide additional insights into the research topic. In this study, researchers conducted qualitative digital analysis to gain additional understanding of the context of emojis use in language communication on social media platforms. This may include sharing post content, comments, or messages that contain emojis, whether from public sources such as social media or private sources such as online journals or electronic mail.

2. Interview

Qualitative interviews involve face-to-face or telephone conversations. Researchers asked few; generally open-ended questions intended to elicit participants' views and opinions on the topic under study. Through qualitative interviews, researchers gained deep insight into the understanding and interpretation of messages involving the use of emojis in language communication on social media platforms. Researchers asked participants about their experiences in using and interpreting emojis, as well as their views regarding the clarity and effectiveness of communications containing emojis.

Procedures

Creswell is a recognized expert in qualitative research methods. Creswell presents various qualitative data collection techniques that can be used in research. The following are several data collection techniques used in this research.

1. Digital Analytics

Digital analysis involved the study of various types of written text containing emojis, such as posts, comments and messages on social media platforms. This helped in understanding the context and patterns of emojis use in language communication on social media.

2. Interview

In-depth interviews was used to gain a deep understanding of the experiences, perceptions and practices of using emojis in language communication on social media platforms. Open-ended questions will be used to explore participants' interpretations and experiences regarding messages containing emojis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis procedures in qualitative research involved several key steps to make sense of the collected data. According to Miles et al. (2014), data analysis in qualitative research includes three main stages: condensation, display, and verifying or drawing conclusions.

1. Condensation

This stage involved summarizing and condensing the collected data to highlight the essential points. For this study, condensation included transcribing interviews, summarizing observational notes, and extracting relevant textual data from social media posts. The goal was to reduce the data to manageable segments that retain their core meaning and relevance to the research questions.

2. Display

In this stage, the condensed data was organized and presented in a systematic way to facilitate interpretation. This involved creating visual representations such as charts, matrices, or thematic maps that illustrate the relationships and patterns within the data. For this study, the display included categorizing emojis usage by type, context, and platform, as well as mapping participants' interpretations and reactions to different emojis.

3. Verifying or Drawing Conclusions

The final stage involved interpreting the displayed data to draw meaningful conclusions. Researchers looked for patterns, themes, and insights that answer the research questions. This step included validating findings by cross-checking with participants and triangulating data from different sources. For this study, verifying or drawing conclusions involved synthesizing insights from interviews, observations, and textual data to understand how emojis were used and interpreted in language communication on social media platforms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the participant responses underscore the critical role emojis play in enhancing digital communication on social media platforms. Data were collected through digital analysis and in-depth interviews with participants to gain comprehensive insights. The first participant emphasized that emojis significantly enhance the emotional nuance and clarity of messages. This sentiment was echoed by the eleventh participant, who noted that emojis enrich text messages by adding emotional depth, thus reducing ambiguity. Emojis can convey emotions that might be difficult to express through text alone, making messages more vivid and expressive. According to Bai et al. (2019), emojis serve as visual cues that can help convey emotional nuances, thereby enhancing the clarity and expressiveness of digital communication.

However, the interpretation of emojis can vary significantly depending on the context and the relationship between the sender and receiver. The second participant pointed out that while emojis express feelings effectively, some ambiguity exists in their interpretation. The

fifth participant also highlighted that the placement of emojis within sentences affects their interpretation, indicating that the context and relational dynamics are crucial for understanding the intended message. This aligns with the findings of Miller et al. (2016), who suggest that the meaning of emojis can be highly dependent on the context and the interpersonal relationship between communicators.

Cultural and generational contexts also play a significant role in how emojis are understood. The third participant observed that cultural context heavily influences emoji usage and interpretation. This notion was supported by the eighth participant, who mentioned that the effectiveness of emojis depends on user awareness and contextual clarity. The participants noted that different cultures might interpret the same emoji differently, which can lead to misunderstandings. Researcher such as Prada et al. (2018) have highlighted that cultural backgrounds significantly influence how emojis are perceived and used, which can affect the overall clarity of communication.

Additionally, participants like the fourth participant and the twelfth participant emphasized the situational appropriateness of emoji use. They pointed out that while emojis are effective in informal communication, they can cause misunderstandings if used inappropriately in formal settings. The tenth participant mentioned that while emojis generally maintain message meaning and convey emotions effectively, they are less effective for those unfamiliar with emojis, which can lead to misinterpretations. This observation is supported by Ge and Herring (2018), who found that the appropriateness of emoji use varies significantly between different communication contexts, impacting their effectiveness.

Moreover, emojis can modify the meanings of words and sentence structures, thereby enriching the message. The seventh participant and the ninth participant highlighted that emojis enhance clarity by emphasizing emotional tones and adding emphasis to messages. However, they also noted that misuse or overuse of emojis can lead to communication ineffectiveness and misunderstandings. The thirteenth participant observed that overuse of emojis might make the communication appear less serious and more prone to misinterpretation. Research done by Coyle and Carmichael (2019) indicates that while emojis can enrich communication, their overuse or inappropriate use can undermine message clarity and effectiveness.

The findings from the participants can be interpreted through three main themes: emotional expression and clarity, contextual and cultural influences, and ambiguity and misinterpretation.

1. Emotional Expression and Clarity

Participants overwhelmingly agree that emojis effectively convey emotions and enhance message clarity. Emojis provide an additional layer of meaning to text, making communication more vivid and expressive. For example, the fourteenth participant mentioned that emojis help convey emotions and intentions, adding emotional or humorous nuances to messages. However, the effectiveness of emojis depends on the relationship and context in which they are used. The sixth participant stated that emojis facilitate the expression of emotions to recipients, though effectiveness can vary based on the honesty of the user. Derks et al. (2020) support this by noting that emojis function as non-verbal cues in digital communication, significantly enhancing emotional expressiveness and message clarity.

2. Contextual and Cultural Influences

Cultural backgrounds and situational contexts significantly impact emoji usage and interpretation. Participants like the eleventh participant and the thirteenth participant observed that emojis are interpreted differently across cultures and generations, which can sometimes lead to confusion. Understanding these cultural nuances and situational appropriateness is crucial for clear communication. The third participant noted that the cultural context influences how emojis are used and interpreted, suggesting that clear communication relies on understanding these cultural nuances and situational appropriateness. Studies by Li et al. (2019) highlight that cultural and generational

differences can significantly affect how emojis are interpreted, underlining the importance of cultural awareness in digital communication.

3. Ambiguity and Misinterpretation

While emojis generally help clarify messages, their misuse or unclear context can lead to misunderstandings. Participants like the tenth participant and the fourteenth participant shared instances where emojis were misinterpreted, leading to confusion and the need for further clarification. The ninth participant mentioned that emojis are often misunderstood due to varying interpretations of each emoji, which underscores the importance of context-aware usage. Strategies to handle such misunderstandings include direct clarification of the intended meaning and being context-aware when using emojis. The seventh participant suggested choosing emojis that are widely understood and relevant to the context to minimize the risk of misinterpretation. This is in line with research by Kaye et al. (2016), which suggests that while emojis can enhance communication, their ambiguous nature can lead to misunderstandings, necessitating context-aware and culturally informed use.

How do Users Understand, Interpret, and Perceive the Clarity and Effectiveness of Language Communication Using Emojis on Social Media Platforms?

Emojis play a crucial role in enhancing emotional expression and message clarity on social media. However, cultural and contextual factors heavily influence emoji usage and interpretation. While generally effective, emojis can occasionally lead to misunderstandings if not used appropriately. In addressing Research Question 1, the findings affirm that users perceive emojis as pivotal tools for enhancing emotional expression and message clarity on social media platforms. Emojis are universally acknowledged by participants to enrich digital communication by adding emotional nuance that text alone may struggle to convey effectively. They serve not only to express emotions clearly but also to emphasize the tone and intent of messages, making interactions more engaging and expressive. This aligns with contemporary research emphasizing emojis' role in digital discourse, where they serve as visual cues enhancing emotional transparency and reducing ambiguity in online communication (Jones et al., 2021). Participants' insights underscore the widespread recognition of emojis as facilitators of richer, more nuanced digital interactions, enhancing users' ability to convey emotions with clarity and precision.

How is the Meaning of Words and Sentence Structure in Messages that Use Emojis?

For Research Question 2, the investigation reveals that emoji use significantly influences the interpretation and structure of words and sentences, with contextual and cultural factors exerting substantial influence. Participants highlighted that the interpretation of emojis can vary widely across different cultural backgrounds and contexts, influencing their usage patterns and communicative effectiveness. This aligns with recent studies emphasizing the importance of cultural and situational context in emoji interpretation, where differences in cultural norms and communication styles shape the meaning and impact of emojis in digital communication (Kaye et al., 2016; Li et al., 2019). Therefore, while emojis enhance emotional expression and clarity, their effectiveness hinges on users' understanding of these contextual nuances, ensuring that they convey intended meanings accurately across diverse cultural and social contexts.

Emojis serve as powerful tools for enriching digital communication by providing emotional context and clarity to messages. Their effective use depends on users' understanding of cultural nuances and contextual appropriateness. Emojis not only facilitate the expression of emotions but also help clarify the tone and intent of messages, making communication more engaging and less prone to misinterpretation. However, to maximize their effectiveness, users must be mindful of the cultural and contextual factors that influence how emojis are perceived and understood. This conclusion is supported by research from Jones et al. (2021), which highlight that the effective use of emojis in communication relies

heavily on cultural awareness and contextual appropriateness, ensuring that messages are conveyed clearly and accurately.

Emojis add a new dimension to digital communication by enabling users to express emotions that are difficult to convey through text alone. This enhances the richness of digital communication, making it more expressive and engaging. However, the effectiveness of emojis hinges on the user's ability to understand and navigate cultural and contextual nuances. Misunderstandings can arise when emojis are used without considering the recipient's cultural background or the context of the conversation. Therefore, while emojis are a valuable addition to digital communication, their use must be contextually and culturally informed to ensure they enhance rather than hinder communication.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that emojis play a crucial role in enhancing digital communication on social media platforms by providing nuanced emotional cues and improving message clarity. Participants consistently highlighted that emojis enable users to convey emotions effectively, emphasizing tone and intent in digital interactions. The findings show that the use of emojis significantly influences the interpretation and structure of words and sentences, with cultural and contextual factors profoundly impacting their communicative effectiveness. While emojis generally enhance communication by providing emotional context, their optimal use requires sensitivity to situational appropriateness and cultural nuances. Therefore, users must be mindful of these factors to avoid misinterpretations and maximize the potential of emojis in digital discourse. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how emojis function in contemporary digital communication, emphasizing their role in fostering more expressive and engaging online interactions.

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