



An Assessment of Emoji's Growth in Communication Process

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ABSTRACT:

Rapid growth of internet and the emergence of social media have given birth to digital textual communication called emoticon. Emoticons are the easiest way of expressing feelings in textual communication. This paper is intended to highlight the emergence and evolution of emoji and its popularity among English speaking students around the world. Due to its excessive usage for interaction, the emojis are responsible for shaping the personality and identity of the youths. However, the negative effects of the emojis cannot be undermined as it hinders the growth of vocabulary and grammar among youngsters and people often misinterpret the meaning of the symbols. Despite the pros and cons of emojis, it is the most convenient and fastest mode of expression and it is helpful in establishing both informal and formal relationships. Thus in the near future, communication through web-based media might take a different form with more emojis and less text.

KEYWORDS:Emoji, Communication, Emoticon, Social Media, GIF

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I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, people live when globalization is at its height and technology advancements and electronic devices dominate people's daily lives. Due to significant scientific developments and the internet growth, the entire world is now interconnected through social media. Various social media platforms allow people of all age groups to communicate freely via social networking sites. The social media users communicate through written messages, voice messages and even through pictorial representations in various social networking sites. There is a common saying that 'A picture is worth a thousand words' - and today's generation uses the Graphics Interchange Formats (GIFs) and emoticons on a regular basis. Emoticons are digital images used in social networking sites and are used along with text messages to communicate with people. [1]

According to research studies, 72% of young people between the ages of 18 and 25 are more likely to use emoticons to communicate their emotions than to use words, and four out of five persons between the ages of 18 and 65 routinely use them. Emojis are fantastic for improving the users contact with others, especially with loved ones, and for expressing the good sentiments, particularly when the users are unable to do so actually. It goes without saying that they have a lot of potential as they are full of meaning. Emojis are unquestionably a significant component of textual communication in general, for better or worse, and that is not likely to change anytime soon. When used in text conversations, emoticons serve as a compliment, not a replacement, for written language, allowing the users to express more effectively and creatively [3].

II. OBJECTIVE

The manuscript is developed based on several objectives. All those objectives are aiming to highlight the role, importance and practical implementation of using emojis in communication. The objectives are prepared as follows:

- 1) Emergence and evolution of emoji
- 2) Emotional functions of emoji

- 3) Semantic functions of emoji
- 4) Advantages and disadvantages of emoji in communication process
- 5) Future roadmap of emoji' growth among academician and corporate professionals.

III. EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF EMOJI

We live in an era where globalization is at its peak and the lives of people are ruled by electronic gadgets and technological developments. The whole world has become connected due to enormous scientific advancements and internet. Internet has given birth to social media and it is an extremely powerful tool. People of all age groups use social media to stay connected to each other. Thus, social media shape the lives of individuals and their personality and identity [5].

Sadia (2018) expressed similar views and said that the period in which we are living is technological and it plays a significant role in modifying and changing our communication in spoken as well as in written form [6]. According to Herring (2010), in the late 1980s, CMC (Computer-Mediated-Communication), or the internet, was the result of technological developments. Text messages are frequently sent and received by people using web applications, and CMC is based on written form. According to Rahim et al. (2019), human engagement is most psychologically, intuitively, and naturally accomplished through speech. However, using voice signals to organically and logically communicate with machines requires a lot of work. Williams in 2007, noted the popularity of emoticons. He continued by saying that when SMS and the internet became more common in the late 1990s, emoticons were also frequently used. It was adopted by users of SMS, emails, and online forums. Encyclopedia Britannica reports that during the 1960s and the 1990s, internet was based only on language used in text. He added that in late 1990s, with the spread of internet and SMS, the emoticons were also widely in use. People started using it in SMS, emails and internet forums. The smileys and the emoticons ":-(":"-)" were initially employed in 1982 by a computer scientist in the United States to give emotions to CMC. A combination of the words, "emoticon" is based solely on written language. Emojis, according to Tremeer (2019), are pictograms that date back to the very earliest written language on the planet. According to Blagdon (2013), an emoji is a Japanese word that means "picture character". [2]

Shigetaka Kurita, a Japanese employee, created the first emojis in the late 1990s by developing little pictures when he was working on the first mobile phone with an internet connection, in order to appease the teenage consumers (Sadia, 2018). Emojis are now used to communicate a variety of ideas, feelings, and signs. There are many other types of emoji, such as facial emoji, which depicts a person's current mood or emotion, such as happiness, sadness, or hunger. Other emoji includes; running feet, fingers, waving hands, folded arms and slanted bodies. Some emoji represents location, food, clothing and tools [6].

Emojis are widely used for internet communication. Clarity, ease and conduciveness to emotional expressions are the main factors that influence users to use emoji. Emojis help users to express themselves, relax mood and build one's own identity. They help to promote interaction, establish emotional tone, enhance context appropriateness and reduce discourse ambiguity. In addition, emojis are also used to build and enhance social communication and social relations while strengthening communication. Thus, in the process of using emojis, different outcomes result from individual variances in platforms, cultural backgrounds and settings. For further clarification of its importance in our day to day lives, the emotional and semantic functions of emoji have been taken into consideration and elaborated [4].

IV. THE EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONS OF EMOJI:

Emojis are a crucial medium for interaction and emotional communication on the Internet since they are non-verbal indications with deep emotional implications. Emojis extensive emotional connotation makes them a crucial topic for researchers who study emotions and create emoji emotional lexicons. The majority of emojis were positive, but some may also indicate sarcasm or satire, according to Petra et al. (2015), who categorized emojis into positive, negative, and neutral categories based on their emotional distribution [4].

Emojis are frequently used to convey emotions in internet communication because of their extensive emotional implications. Emojis are typically used more in happy communications and less in sad or angry messages (Cheng, 2017). Emoji vary in how they draw attention and elicit responses from viewers (Hjartstrom

et al., 2019). Facial emoji perform better than non-facial emoji (Jaeger et al., 2019) despite the fact that both types of emoji can represent emotions (Riordan, 2017a). Although using non-facial emoji might evoke pleasant feelings, notably delight, it cannot alter the message's valence (Riordan, 2017b). The emotional expression of different emoji combinations can also vary subtly. For instance, López and Cap (2017) discovered that when frog or hot beverage emojis are combined with other emojis, there will be noticeable but minor emotional alterations.

V. THE SEMANTIC FUNCTIONS OF EMOJI

Emoji are employed in communication to convey semantic meanings in addition to emotions (Na'aman et al., 2017). In CMC, they can function as non-verbal clues that aid in deciphering the messages' underlying meanings (Walther and D'Addario, 2001; Jibril and Abdullah, 2013). In addition, many academics in the field of computers focus on the emoji word sense disambiguation challenge due to the diversity and closeness of emoji semantics. According to several studies, emoji constitute a separate language. They can transmit meanings as an independent expressive modality; have a semantic role, and a visual rhetorical function. By combining several emoji, they can also express more nuanced semantics (López and Cap, 2013). Emoji have deeper semantic significance than plain text (Ai et al., 2017), and they are semantically equivalent across languages (Barbieri et al., 2016b). Emoji, according to Alshenqeeti (2016), are fundamentally a type of visual paralanguage. Emoji are also frequently used in conjunction with text and are rarely used alone. To establish a complete meaning, emoji must be used in conjunction with the text (Zhou et al., 2017), which improves the text's credibility and intelligibility (Daniel and Camp, 2018). Emoji are often used by users to complement text (Ai et al., 2017; Donato and Paggio, 2017), further proving that they are a paralanguage. According to the context, emoji have different meanings (Gawne and McCulloch, 2019). Using them could be ambiguous due to their variety of semantics and interpretability (Jaeger et al., 2019). As a result, the word sense disambiguation job for emoji is the subject of a lot of research. Emojinet, created by Wijeratne et al. (2017), mixes text and emoji to eradicate ambiguity.

In addition, some more semantic functions may intensify the usage of emojis.

Emojis Can Help to Convey the Message in the Correct Tone and with the Appropriate Emotion

While it is simple to be blunt and say whatever the user wants to say when texting, it is quite challenging to communicate in a way that is clear and expresses the user's thoughts or feelings. Instead of the intents and emotions of the sender, how the text is received completely depends on the experience and viewpoint of the recipient. Emojis can assist the sender in setting the right mood for their message. Emojis can be used to convey a variety of emotions, such as joy, sorrow, enthusiasm, suspicion, and dread. As the recipient would be able to comprehend what the sender intended or felt, this reduces the likelihood of any misunderstandings.

Emojis Can Make the Conversation More Intimate and Personal

Emojis have been discovered to trigger the same reactions and sentiments in the brain as facial expressions, which can help the conversation feel more intimate when they are used. Emojis help people feel more at ease during phone conversations since they simulate face-to-face interaction. Emoji-free texts lack the feeling of ease and are seen as being more serious and formal. Additionally, the use of emojis is associated with a greater knowledge of one another since they give each other a clearer understanding of their feelings or intentions.

Emojis Can Help People Who Have Issues with Verbal Communication Express Themselves with Clarity

Emojis have travelled a very long way since their invention up until the present. Emojis are widely used today and cover a wide range of topics in addition to emotions. Emojis are available for things like numbers, directions, items, food, and flowers. Emojis almost seem to represent a whole linguistic system that may be used to convey concepts and feelings. Emojis allow those who are unable to send and read text messages to communicate with others over the phone. Due of this, the user base has expanded to include even those who have not had the chance to pursue an education.

Emojis Help Convey Critical or Negative Message in More Acceptable Manner

The sender has undoubtedly been in a position where he/she needs to say something to someone that, when written down as text, may come out as a little unpleasant. So, using of an appropriate emoji at the conclusion of

the message forreducing the impact of the negative or critical comment is being made. It can assist the recipient in conveying sender's message in a way that is more acceptable and would not offend the other person's feelings. Although some people could argue that this distorts reality, it is untrue. The message is still being communicated, but the intensity with which it is presented shifts.

Emojis Are Extremely Engaging and Help Grab Peoples Interest

The inclusion of emojis in any content actually makes text messages far more interesting to read. Emojis contribute to the development of interest since people are more likely to read the complete text as a result of their speculative nature. In addition, it has been demonstrated through scientific research that individuals tend to focus on and remember images more so than words. People must take away and remember something useful from a conversation for it to be effective, and using emojis makes this possible.

Emotions Can Make Texting Fun and Light-Hearted

It is quite easy to simply send "See you there" in a text message to a friend after deciding to meet a friend in the shopping mall. Instead of typing "I am so excited to see you," it can be expressed by adding a cheerful face or a laughing face. Emojis give this quick way to express emotion.

Facial Expressions are Conveyed through Emojis

There are so many emojis available that are helpful to find and that accurately expresses our current mood. We can use an emoji to represent our facial expression in an online chat when the degree of communication has reached a point where it would be useful to do so.

Emojis Assist in Conveying Users Tone of Voice

It might be challenging to convey mood in a social media conversation without explicitly stating thoughts or feelings. Emoticons help to write by bringing emotion to words. The users do not have to use capital letters to make sure that the send's message is heard or just shout it from the rooftops; instead, using an emoji like a loudspeaker [7].

Emojis Can Show User's Gestures

It is really difficult to shrug anyone's shoulders or gasp in disbelief when speaking to someone through online. By selecting an emoji that is appropriate to users' actions, the sender can use an emoji to express to someone exactly how he/she feels.

Emojis Can Add Context

Emojis have made internet communication more vibrant. They have not only made it possible for people to express their thoughts and feelings, but they have also added context to events by giving the users of them visual personalities. By establishing the atmosphere, tone, and circumstances, they also provide more contexts to a scenario.

VI. ADVANTAGES OF EMOJI IN COMMUNICATION

1. Smile is the best attire, and it makes us complete. The yellow colour of the smileys is to spread joy and happiness during communication. Even science proves that yellow colour symbolizes happiness, hope and spontaneity Thus,yellow-coloured smileys are very helpful to express and help people to forget about their pains and troubles.
2. We live in a digital age where time is as costly as money, and we prefer shortcuts and conveniences while expressing ourselves. Smileys are the simplest wayto express or feel towards someone to whom we are talking to, whether grief, empathy,grief or happiness.
3. Emojis give users who prefer less speech and typing a faster, more personalized approach to express the appropriate emotion in a matter of seconds. Many social media sites offer a variety of graphic characters that can be used to convey your worries or respond to a certain situation. We can always use image characters to communicate with the recipient if we have a tendency to make too many errors.

4. Although it is a surprising fact, but many organizations have introduced the usage of emoji in their mailer's list. Using a simile is a better idea to promote brand if an organization deals with social engagement. When your recipient has thousands of emails to check, it is simpler to spot the one with an emoji in the subject line, which is how many young entrepreneurs have developed their businesses.

5. Emoji language is the third famous language of the world, and it is also culturally neutral. We can connect with anyone regardless of their location or religious affiliation without the use of an additional translator app. Emojis have the obvious advantage of eliminating the need for verbal communication when communicating with others who do not speak the same language as you. We can use emoji as a visual dictionary, which is planned to expand more in the future [9].

VII. DISADVANTAGES OF EMOJI IN COMMUNICATION

1. Emojis that appeal to kids more are more likely to catch their attention. Emojis are the ideal vessel to sail at an early age for preliterate children because they can quickly pick up the emoji language. However, as children become older, their emoji addiction becomes more acute. In the end, children are more likely to develop poor communication skills in writing and grammar.

2. Leading brands and corporations are still against using the emoji language to conduct business communication and other official exchanges of words, despite the fact that certain professionals may have adopted the new language to interact freely among their formal circles or groups. The basis of a formal communication should be written words rather than character representations to describe the objective and motive of company, despite the fact that this sounds perfectly reasonable from their perspective.

3. Emojis are the most accessible technique to hide emotions for those who are skilled at it because people can simply fake them. It's possible that the recipients won't be able to tell if the sender's motives or feelings are genuine or false. People can easily become victims of con artists and imposters.

4. Emoji symbols have multiple meanings depending on how they are used and the context in which they are used. There are specific emojis that denote explicit material. To prevent misunderstandings and confusion about the use of suitable emoji, children must first be taught the differences. When utilising improper emojis in a professional setting or formal circle, more care must be taken.

5. Older generations struggle to understand the precise meaning of each character since they are inexperienced with the use of emoji language. This widens their communication gap and puts them in even more unpleasant situations.

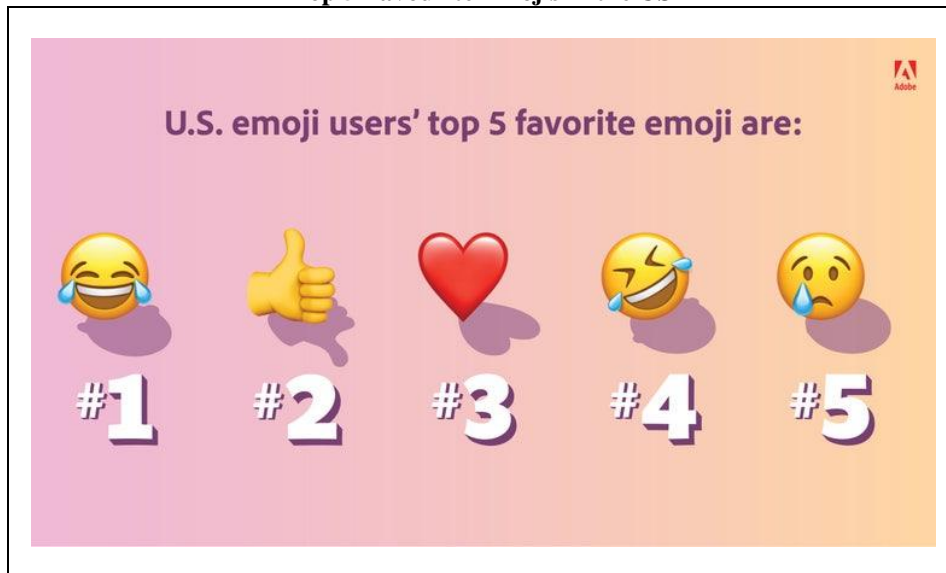
6. Emojis reduce the task of typing social media proposes to make the experience of its users comfortable and enriching. The researcher attempted to intrigue if by any means emojis serve as a tool to reduce the task of typing. In a sense that the emojis act as a complete sense group and may allow avoidance of certain verbal exchange.

7. Emojis have their own grammar. To understand the understanding of emoji language by the participants it was asked if emojis have their own grammar. By saying so the researcher intends to understand if the respondents feel that there are any rules governing the use of emojis and that they are aware of it [9].

VIII. FUTURE ROADMAP OF EMOJI' GROWTH AMONG ACADEMICIAN AND CORPORATE PROFESSIONALS

Emojis continue to improve our everyday lives every year, especially in terms of self-expression, forming new relationships, and mental wellness. Emoji's flexibility opens up countless opportunities for connections as its inclusivity and meanings develop. Emojis provide people with the tools they need, whether it is on social media or messaging apps, to be able to express themselves and exhibit their feelings. They enable people to interact more closely with others and express more than simply words on a screen, according to Kamile Demir (Demir), Computer Scientist at Adobe and Adobe Representative on the Unicode Emoji Subcommittee. Emojis elevate communication and makes its user seem friendlier, cooler, and funnier. Emojis help us to communicate with each other more effectively, so it's no surprise that they've grown to be so popular. Emojis enable us to quickly and easily express emotion, tone, and mood in a variety of contexts, including group chats, dating applications, and business texting. Emojis handle a lot of work when words alone are insufficient. Emojis can sometimes be what it is needed. In the US, the 5 most widely used emojis are depicted in the following figure (**Diagram 1**). Those amusing pictographs can even improve our mental wellness in general [10].

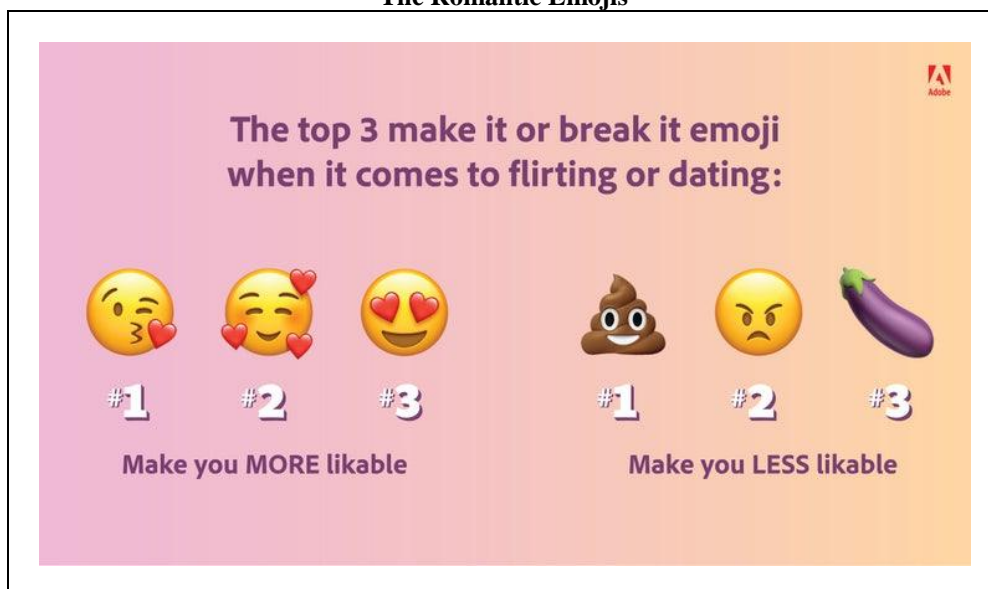
Diagram 1
Top 5 Favourite Emojis in the US



Source: “The Future of Creativity: 2022 U.S. Emoji Trend Report”, Adobe.com, (2022), <https://blog.adobe.com/en/publish/2022/09/13/emoji-trend-report-2022>

The usage of emoji is also applicable to the world of dating and relationships. Using romantic emojis can make or break a first impression and ignite or extinguish a possible flame (Diagram 2). It is quite common in romantic relationships that emotions are properly conveyed at the right point of time. The same thing is also applicable for digital communication. Now-a-days emoji users are expected to communicate emotionally and digitally and are considered part of the expected package of emotional maturity [10].

Diagram 2
The Romantic Emojis



Source: “The Future of Creativity: 2022 U.S. Emoji Trend Report”, Adobe.com, (2022), <https://blog.adobe.com/en/publish/2022/09/13/emoji-trend-report-2022>

Emoji simplify communication in our personal life, so it stands to reason that we would also use them to improve communication in the job. Research studies indicate that the usage of emoji in the work place impacts likability and credibility.

The difficulty of interpreting written communication from coworkers without face-to-face interaction is one of the difficulties of hybrid work. By adding a brief smiling face at the conclusion of your communication, we can avoid many potential misunderstandings.

Even while emoji frequently make communication easier, there is still a chance for miscommunication, especially as 50% of U.S. emoji users utilize emoji differently from their intended meanings. Demographics heavily influence how different individuals use different emoji, especially in light-hearted generational disputes between millennials and Gen Z that frequently take place on social media (remember "cheugy"?). The yeehaw of it all, for instance, has been extensively memeified and ranked as the most misinterpreted emoji in the United States thanks to artists like Kacey Musgraves and Lil Nas X. But part of the appeal of emoji is that they vary as times and cultures do, and emoji are no exception. The fact that emoji are constantly evolving is one of my favourite aspects of them. Emojis can mean anything you want them to mean; meaning only develops in the context of communication with others, according to Hunt. More than ever, we are having a crucial and long overdue discussion about diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Emoji must represent the lives of as many people as possible because they are so ingrained in our daily actions. Age, race/ethnicity, culture, and disability are the top four inclusive emoji categories that U.S. emoji users would want to see extended, according to the report. As emoji continue to have an impact on the globe, 71 percent of American emoji users agree that inclusive emoji can serve to encourage constructive dialogue about societal and cultural concerns, and 75 percent believe that inclusive emoji can help to increase awareness of various groups of people. Despite the fact that there has been gradual improvement over the past few years, 83 percent of respondents think that emoji should still provide more representation [10].

"I love using emoji to infuse my personality into digital communications and allow me to build deeper connections with people despite not being face-to-face," added Demir. Humans have a natural desire for community, connection, and belonging. We also wish to be understood by others and to be understood by others. Because we spend so much time in front of screens, our cravings get stronger because we lack the physical cues provided by body language, tone, and facial expressions. Emoji fill in the gaps that text on a screen cannot by communicating what they can. There is a chance to go beyond the boundaries of language, ideally leading us towards a more compassionate future. The majority of American emoji users (88 percent) report that using an emoji makes them more inclined to feel empathy for someone [10].

IX. CONCLUSION

This paper is intended to convey the importance of emoji in day-to-day virtual communication. This paper also highlights information about the use of emoticons and how it has changed the style of lengthy text messages into shorter forms. With the passage of time, emoticons have transformed into a language and now it is controlling the psyche of social media users. In the current situation, users of all groups are addicted to the use of emojis, and it has become a vital aspect of their textual conversation. They are ruling because of their appealing and colourful nature. They are also helpful in overcoming any barrier between feelings and the text. Thus, it is a proven fact that emojis have achieved the status of a language and its extensive usage has affected the vocabulary of its users but not grammar. Thus, the usage of emojis has made a transformation in the field of digital communication. Emojis are used by users to express their own feelings and emotions. Users use it to communicate for both formal and informal purposes. It causes happiness for the people who use it in their textual communication and also removes ambiguity in their text messages. Thus, its usage cannot be undermined and in the near future, communication through web-based media might take a different form with more emojis and less text.

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