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“A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS, AND SO IS AN EMOJIS 😊”
EMOJISIFICATION OF LANGUAGE: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF
FACEBOOK DISCOURSE

Alienna Kazmi, Arooj Rana, Uzma Anjum, Madiha Khan

ABSTRACT

This research study aims to examine language change occurring in written discourse due to increase in the usage of emojis and the way emojis, in comparison to words, are performing communicative functions on social media platforms such as Facebook. The study focused on Pakistani Facebook users. For the study, Facebook is one of the most authentic social media platforms because 71.75 % (Internet World Stat) of Pakistani internet users use Facebook which is the highest statistics among all social media applications. In order to investigate the recent language change and communicative functions performed by emojis, we utilized Speech act theory as it strives to investigate that by uttering something a speaker is indeed performing a social action, thus named as “Speech act”. Searle’s (1979) model of Illocutionary act in Speech act theory will particularly be used for the study. In addition to that, Dresner & Herring (2010) state that that smileys/ emojis function as illocutionary force, this theory will be applied to strengthen the argument. Moreover, for the collection of data, Discourse Completion Task/Test were used to collect elicited responses from the participants of focused groups. These focused groups contained students and faculty members from NUML and AIR Universities. The study concluded that, indeed, there is an arousing change in the written communication because younger generation uses emojis as compared to the aged people. The new forms of digital written communication (Facebook) has an immense amount of emojis instead of words for expression of their emotions. Emojis play vital role in conveying the “expressive” speech act in written communication and use of words is becoming lesser. They are pragmatically as competent as the words in the in communication, they fill the gap of facial expressions in the written mode of communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, communication is as valuable as it was thousands of years ago. The difference that occurred is the way we do it. In this modern time of technology, we have access to various mediums through which we are able to express news, opinions, disappointment, happiness, thoughts, status, knowledge and encouragement. New technology and social media are prominently influencing the way we communicate with each other. As said by Evans (2014) that “A picture is worth a thousand words ... and so is an emoji” (p.32). Emojis are argued to be pictorial cues that emphasize, compliment, and substitute for words. They give a descriptive and a richer form of communication and started being referred a “new universal language” (Evans, 2014). Thus, this study is particularly focused to determine and examine the recently occurring change in language due to the use of emojis in online communication and the way emojis, in comparison to words, are performing communicative functions.

Certainly, language is a social entity and has a power of constant transformation and evolution (Sirbu, 2015). Language is continuously in a mode of change. It not only changes across social group but also across space. From time to time and generation after generation, pronunciations change, new words are coined or borrowed, morphology either decays or develops, the meanings of old words change. In the last few decades, and with the prevalence of various computer-mediated communication technologies, the language used in social media has seen various innovations in it (Wicke, 2017). The introduction of emojis as an entity to communicate and to interact is one fine example of it. Emojis have shown various effects on language and the way we communicate which results in reshaping our daily communication (Wicke, 2017). Emojis nowadays are being used in almost every social media application and online communication channels, for example, Instant Messages (IM), Twitter, Facebook, and Emails

etc. Their rapid use among people make them popular and has appealed to scholarly attention (e.g., Rezabek & Cochenour 1998; Walther & D'Addario 2001; Dresner & Herring 2010).

Some applications like Snapchat and WhatsApp included emojis in their status features as a new updated version which allow the users to demonstrate their current activity status (Cipriani, 2017). At the time of Donald Trump's inauguration, as president, the users of Twitter includes the "raised fist" (👊) emojis to show resistance against him (Azhar, 2017). In addition to this, Facebook users call to device emojis as the reaction icons (👍, ❤️, 😄, 😐, 😞, 😬) on the posts so that they may be able to express multiple emotions along with its traditional icon of "like" (👍) and their call was answered in 2016. According to Krug (2016), users of Facebook complained that they were feeling restricted while responding to the newsfeed activity prior to the Facebook emojis update 2016. So, after conducting focus groups, Facebook released an emojis expansion.

Certainly, Facebook with more than [1.8 billion monthly active users](#), is considered as world's most popular social media site (Hutt, 2018). Moreover, according to a statistic presented by "Internet World Stat" (📊) 71.74 % of the internet users in Pakistan use Facebook, making it the most used social media in the country. There are 35 million active users on Facebook and this number is increasing by 17% annually (Internet World Stat). Thus, this study is particularly taking Facebook as a source of data collection to examine the use of emojis by Pakistani Facebook user in their online conversations.

In order to investigate the recent language change and communicative functions performed by emojis, we utilized Speech act theory. Speech act theory strives to investigate that by uttering something a speaker is indeed performing a social action, thus named as "Speech Act". These speech acts are classified into three types as: 1) locutionary, 2) illocutionary 3) perlocutionary.

For this study, the model of Searle (1979) on illocutionary acts is particularly chosen as it helps to examine that either emojis are just an extra linguistic communication medium that express emotions or they can help carry an important feature of the linguistic utterance they are attached to: What the user intends by what he or she writes. The study explored the difference in the usage of emojis by males, females and people of different age groups. In this research, Discourse Completion test/task (DCT) were used for the analysis as DCT is one of the best techniques to examine the elicited responses of the speakers with the help of questionnaire and multiple types of interviews. This study followed a mix-method approach as it includes the focus group questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and analyzed them quantitatively and qualitatively respectively. Moreover, the research is exploratory in nature. Being interpretivists, we believe that realities vary from person to person and situation to situation.

1.1 Statement of Problem

Emojis are aiding in communicative functions across different contexts. There is a slight shift from words to emojis use in online conversations. This research study examined the communicative functions performed by emojis in social media interactions by Pakistani Facebook users. The main focus was on the speech acts that emojis convey with or without the presence of words with them. Moreover, the study also looked for any difference in the use of emojis among different age groups.

1.2 Research Questions

This research will address one main question and other sub-questions of it:

1. In recent times, how emojis are replacing the use of words in social media interactions by Pakistani Facebook users?
-

Following will be the sub-questions addressed by this study:

- i. Which speech acts are performed by the emojis in social media interactions by Pakistani Facebook users?
 - ii. Instead of words, how do emojis perform those speech acts in social media conversation?
 - iii. How usage of emojis vary among people of different age groups in social media conversations?
-

1.3 Research objectives

The study looked for language change i.e. the replacement of word via emojis on social media interactions in Pakistani context. This was further explored with the help of following objectives:

1. To investigate the type of speech acts performed by emojis in social media interactions by Pakistani Facebook users
 2. To explore the way these speech acts are performed by emojis, instead of words, in Facebook conversations
 3. To identify the difference in the usage of emojis among people of different age groups
-

1.4 Significance of the Study

Emojis play a significant role in online conversations nowadays. This study is a good contribution in the field of linguistics as it would help to understand the language change occurring through emojis. It helps in making language experts cognizant about the communicative functions being performed by emojis. In addition to that, the study aids in understanding the difference in the use of emojis by males, females and different age group people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Research on Emojis

In use of emoticons on the basis of gender difference are explicitly examined by Chris Fullwood (2007), where Witmer & Katzman (1997) tried to find if gender can be identified through a CMC message (Witmer & Katzman, 1997). In a research study conducted by Chen et al., (2017), 183 countries were examined with respect to the use of emojis. The result showed that there exists a significant difference in the usage of emojis between the genders. Women in one way or the other express their feelings better with the help of these non-verbal cues (Chen, et al., 2017). Also, females use one or multiple emojis in a text however, males make use of multiple emojis in text. Both genders preferred different kinds of emojis. For instance, male users employ heart- related emojis more while female users use face-related emojis in a large amount. In addition to that, the usage of emojis is affected by varying scenarios in CMC for boy males and females i.e. males use emojis more in private conversations while females also use Emojis in a regular fashion on the public communication platforms such as Twitter. The sentiment expressed by emojis may differ between males and females for a particular time, such as weekdays, weekends, and festivals (Chen et al., 2017). In another study Wolf (2000) noted that when males are interacting with females, they try to adopt the standard of females while expressing more emotions (Wolf, 2000). Also, men and women practice the use of emoticons for diverse purposes. Females use emoticons while they are interacting in a humorous way while males use emoticons in a teasing or sarcastic manner (Wolf, 2000).

In a study conducted on Omani males and females during conversations between their friends and relatives regarding emojis use on the application WhatsApp, Al Rashdi noted that certain emojis were reflecting in the group of males and others were more frequent among the members of female group thus indicating gender differences (Al Rashdi, 2015). Also, according to Al

Rashdi (2015), Emojis not only represent sentiments and emotions but also act as substitution of lexical items, contextualization cues and indexical signs. The study also describes that how through constant repetition over a certain period of time, a specific emoji takes on the meaning which it might not have in any other situation or context but the app in which it is being used; in this case: WhatsApp (Al Rashdi, 2015). On the other hand, Tandyonomanu & Tsurouyya (2018) argue that emojis act as a complement for nonverbal cues in face to face communication rather than as a substitute since face to face is the most ideal interaction. In another study by Gullberg (2016), it is stated that emojis prevent the misunderstandings conveyed in the written texts because emojis are pictures, and as such, their functions and interpretations can be far more varied than that of a lexeme.

In a study, Stark and Crawford argued that emojis appear in daily use on social media, are representative of society, culture and economic scenarios (Stark & Crawford, 2015). They also examined emojis as social, cultural and historical objects and as an example of technical standardization. According to Stark and Crawford (2015), emojis are representatives of emotional data of large interest to the digital economy, and they continue to act as signifiers of affective meaning. While Wicke (2017) states that the basic purpose behind the invention of emojis was the annotation of an emotional intention which is an addition to any type of written text. Emojis can connote and denote ideas in written scripts. Also, emojis act as ideographic and phonographic signs (Wicke, 2017). The study also relates semiotic emojis in Saussurian terms as in any written language the word “house” has to be written, there will be a concept or mental image of that word in reader’s mind. A signified concept i.e. the mental image of the house and signifier i.e. the house itself will be combined in the emoji picture of the house.

According to Brisson (2015), emojis are themselves the representatives of multiple emotional reactions. “Each emoji is similar to a logograph, as they can represent a singular word or morpheme” (Brisson, 2015). Tatman (2016) as cited in Wicke (2017) is quite a similar study

in which Tatman (2016) states that there may not be an exact same syntax in the usage of emojis as there is in the language but, for sure, it is not something entirely in random order (Tatman, 2016).

The increase in the use of emojis, the digital pictures which can represent a feeling or a word in an email or a text, and the fact that they could be string together in a row to make a sentence with full and real meaning brings a question of whether there is a possibility that they create a new language amongst technologically savvy youth and are devaluing the existing language (Alshenqeeti, 2016). Also, there is a further depth to the use of emojis which suggests that they are returning language to a very early stage of human communication (Alshenqeeti, 2016). There are also signs that emojis may be gender-specific or culture-specific which indicates that women use more emojis as compared to men in order to express their feelings.

They also indicate that age is of less indication of technological capability and awareness. Emojis appear to be fulfilling the need of adding non-verbal cues in the digital communication. Moreover, emojis are devices which are used for demonstrating feelings, emotions, intent and one that are usually presented with the help of non-verbal cues in normal personal communications but are not attained in digital messages (Alshenqeeti, 2016). There are universal meanings to emojis. It suggests that emojis may be in one way or the other be able to contribute to rise the cross-cultural communication clarity (Alshenqeeti, 2016).

In addition to that Andoroutsopoulos (2011), states that some scholars viewed CMC as chunk of a 'general tendency for writing to become a transcription of speech'. In a way, the written discourse is a reflection of spoken one. The absence of facial expressions is compensated with the help of keyboard and typeface. The other compensation devices were, emoticons, abbreviations that express different types of laughter, imitations of expressive prosody by repetition of punctuations and letters. She also introduced linguistic economy as a third theme

that includes any strategy of shortening the form of message (Androutsopoulos, 2011). She added that CMC created an urge to make written communication appropriate for social interactions. The three themes suggested earlier regarding innovation may be viewed as responses for the said need. Three themes include orality, semiotic compensation and economy.

Owing to the fundamental incentive of growing and condensing information, emojis may add to a generational decrease in the vocabulary of young people (Wilson & Gove, 1999) that is, the current generation is becoming less expressive in text. On the other hand, Tagg (2012) states that it is not true because there exist many other examples of generations who used compressed writing (i.e. telegrams and postcards), which never affect their vocabulary.

Moreover, Tuttle (2015) claims that the standards of general public writing are relatively increased. Nonetheless, according to Tagg (2012), there exists a connection between language and how society values technology. She further argues that this link is altered through the way writing and technology are utilized (Tagg, 2012).

2.2 Speech Act Theory

Speech act hypothesis gives us a method for burrowing underneath the surface of talk and setting up the capacity of what is said by Cook (1992). The speech act theory springs from the basic idea that in saying something a speaker is performing a social action, a “speech act”. Speech act Theory endeavors to clarify how speakers utilize language to achieve planned activities and how listeners derive proposed significance frame what is said. Despite the fact that discourse demonstration ponders are currently viewed as a sub-branch of multifaceted pragmatics, they really take their root in the reasoning of dialect. It was for a really long time the presumption of rationalists that the matter of an 'announcement' must be to 'depict' some situation, or to 'express some reality', which it must do either genuinely or erroneously.

Numerous things, which would once have been acknowledged without question as 'statements' by the two scholars and grammarians have been examined with new care (Austin, 1962, p.1).

According to Thomas (1995), there exists a relationship between the linguistic form and communicative functions. These forms are capable of serving and the settings or contexts in which these linguistic forms can have those communicative functions (Thomas, 1995).

In a book by Kaburise (2011), the term “functions of language” is used in accordance with speech act theory, in which functions are equaled to the intention and meaning of the speaker (Kaburise, 2011). A speech act analysis is centered on the idea that utterances are made for certain functions and that a specific structural arrangement of components is necessary to articulate those functions. What constitutes pragmatics is an open question, but it seems to agree that pragmatics is a system of rules that defines the relation of meaning to the context in which it occurs, that is, it matches functions with particular language choices context. A pragmatic investigation is a combination of syntactic / semantic inquiry and study of meaning in relation to language situations. The pragmatic analysis deals more with the meaning of the utterance than with the meaning of the sentence (Kaburise, 2011).

The use of emojis is increasing day by day, up till now, they are not being examined with respect to the communicative functions they perform on Facebook. In this study, Emojis will be analyzed with the help of speech acts as they perform in social media interaction (Facebook).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

For this research study, Speech act theory was applied since the researchers were looking for the communicative functions performed by emojis in daily communication on Facebook. Speech act theory states that while speaking, the speaker is performing some action. The basic idea behind speech act theory is that while speaking something, a speaker is performing a social

action named as “speech act”. The philosophical origin of the theory has been in Austin (1962), he examined different types of utterances as “performatives” and “constatives”. As Austin (1962) said that constatives are only descriptive phrases that can either be true or false e.g. “it is hot in here” while performatives are phrases that realize a social act e.g. “I hereby pronounce you husband and wife”. Communicative functions will be analyzed by using speech act theory. Speech act theory was given by J. Austin in 1962 and it says that it is astonishing to consider that there are a lot many things that we do just because we utter it (Austin, 1962).

Austin further argued that by distinguishing a full group of senses which indicates of “doing something” which are included “together when we say, what is obvious, that to say something is in the full normal sense to do something-which includes the utterance of certain noises, the utterance of certain words in a certain construction, and the utterance of them with a certain 'meaning' in the favorite philosophical sense of that word, i.e. with a certain sense and with a certain reference” (Austin, 1962). Moving further, Austin said that there are very different functions performed by the way we use speech. It makes bigger changes in our acts as well that how do we “use” it, in what way and in which sense. It creates a big difference if we are advising someone or just suggesting, or actually ordering, either we were strictly promising or only announcing a vague intention, and so on. The analysis of illocutionary acts performed through linguistic utterances (also called the illocutionary force of these utterances) was further developed by Searle (1969; 1979).

According to Smith (2003), Searle’s study regarding language and speech acts comprises of an initial step in a prolonged journey of social, mental, institutional reality, the self and the free will. In the study of speech acts, he has a grasp with the facts of language- with referring, predictions and acts related to questioning, stating, promising and commanding. Searle (1979) basically extended the idea of illocutionary acts in his own way. Searle offers an altered classification of speech acts which rests on a distinction between two “directions of fit”;

language and reality, from word to world and from world to word in “A Taxonomy of illocutionary Acts” (Smith, 2003).

Searle’s classification is as follows:

-
1. Representatives: statements, asserting, concluding, claims, hypothesis, suggestions, descriptions etc.
 2. Directives: commands, requests, entreaties, challenges, invitations, orders, summons, dares.
 3. Commissive: promises, threatening, offering, oaths, pledges, vows.
 4. Expressives: congratulating, apologizing, condolences, welcoming, thanking, greetings.
 5. Declaratives: appointing, baptizing, marrying, blessings, firings, arrests, juridical speech acts such as sentencing, declaring a mistrial etc.
-

According to another theory presented by Dresner & Herring (2010), they state that smileys/emojis function as illocutionary force. While briefly outlining the speech act theory, they explained that smileys are a source to present illocutionary force. They also drew parallels between punctuation marks and emoticons/smileys. According to Dresner and Herring, many times, it is observed that smileys are not just sign of emotions rather they are the indicators of illocutionary force of the text with which they are attached to (Dresner & Herring, 2010). They aid in conveying speech act with the help of their use. This use of smileys not only add to the locution (the propositional content) of language being used but also play a role as an important linguistics emotion indicator (Dresner & Herring, 2010).

According to their analysis, these smileys perform the same function as the punctuation marks do. They enhance the meaning of a text. Thus, falling into the category of linguistics. Emoticons are giving a pragmatic meaning just as the words do. Dresner and Herring also build

that smileys are not necessarily always express emotive functions but also their meanings are tied to language itself (Dresner & Herring, 2010).

In this research study, we used Searle's classified speech acts since they provide a wider and explicit range of speech acts. His classification made the distinctions easy. We also employed Dresner and Herring's theory about the indication of emojis as illocutionary forces. For analyzing the data collected from Facebook, these speech acts were helpful.

3.2 Methodology

It is a case study in Pakistani context related to the use of emojis in daily instant communication on the social media platform "Facebook". The nature of this study is exploratory as this study tends to explore the language change and communicative purposes performed by emojis on Facebook.

To examine the use of emojis on Facebook through the statistics taken by the questionnaire a mixed method approach i.e. an amalgam of both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used in this research study. McKim (2017) quoted Creswell & Clark (2007) that selecting mix methods research is advantageous because it combines the strengths of each methodology and reduces the weaknesses (McKim, 2017). Creswell (1994) described the three categories of mix methods approach: triangulation design, explanatory design and exploratory design.

To investigate the research theme triangulation method was used which consists of questionnaire and focus group interviews. To examine the use of emojis among different age groups and genders one method cannot provide absolute certainty. The questionnaires present adequate empirical evidence about research issues and the information collected from focus groups is used to reflect profoundly on those themes.

There were two focused (closed-in which only participants can see the activities) groups of both young and aged people in which DCT (Discourse Completion Task) was used to get the elicited responses of various scenarios presented to the participants (O'Keeffe, Clancy, & Adolphs, 2011). The DCT sample contained random questions about daily life like politics, religion, media etc. on which the participants responded in the comments section. DCT is one of the most used techniques to get elicited responses from participants. It includes many methods for collecting data but for inter-language studies it mainly deals with; role playing, questionnaire (interviews) and corpus-based data. We asked different questions in the posts and the participants (total 40) responded in the comment section, which was actually the data. For this study, DCT questionnaire helped in getting the responses and the data collected became more reliable with the help of semi structure interviews. Random sampling technique was used for semi-structure interviews.

3.3 Research Design

Being interpretivists, we examined the new rising phenomenon through the use of emojis. It is an in-depth study of the usage of emojis on Facebook and we, as researchers, applied Discourse completion task (DCT). This research is exploratory in nature because quantitative data extends qualitative data as it is helpful to explore the language change and communicative purposes performed by emojis on Facebook. To illustrate the meaning of each emojis, a book named “Semiotics of Emojis, The Rise of Visual Language in the Age of the Internet” was being utilized. In this book, the writer explained the meanings of emojis. These meanings, however, can be changed with respect to culture, situation, gender, time and many other factors. Creswell (1994) defined exploratory design that in first phase of this design qualitative data is collected and its findings are used in quantitative data which further assisted in qualitative data analysis.

3.4 The Data and Data Collection

For this study, we took participants from Air and Numl University specifically as they are in the capital of the country and people from all over the country come and study here. The universities reside in the premises of Islamabad which made the data collection convenient. For the study, both males and females were included following the age group between 18-60 years. The major criterion for their selection was if they use Facebook on regular basis and also if they were willing to participate in the project. (Dresner & Herring, 2010) The participants of the study included all the members of focused groups. These members were the students and faculty members of Air and Numl University. There were DCT questionnaires that were posted in the focus group for collection of data and semi structure interviews aided in strengthening the arguments. For data collection, we use our own Facebook accounts for making closed groups of both male and female participants.

3.5 Data analysis procedure

For the data analysis of this research study, speech act theory (Searle's classification, 1979) was utilized to observe the illocutionary forces exerted by emojis in daily communication of Facebook. Communicative functions performed by emojis were analyzed through speech act theory while the responses of questionnaire were analyzed by using Discourse Completion Task (DCT). There were 200 screenshots of the data collected on Facebook, 100 from each group, younger and aged. We applied Danesi (2016) concept of semiotics of Emojis, Dresner and Herrings (2010) concept of "illocutionary force" exerted by emojis and the classification of speech acts by Searle's (1979) in order to check the influence of emojis in daily communication on Facebook.

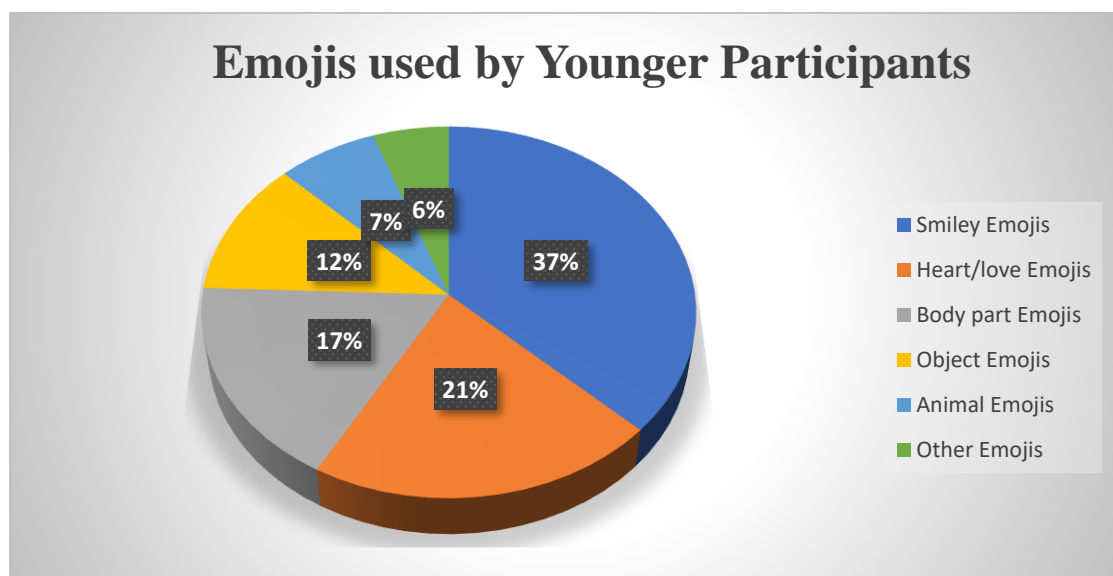
DATA ANALYSIS

In this research study, the researchers analyzed the comments gathered on the responses of DCT questions and assessed the semi-structure interviews taken from the participants. The researchers post various kinds of questions on the page of the Facebook research group and the participants responded the answers in the comments section. It has been observed that there are a few specific themes on which emojis work the most and they include; laughter, anger, support/approval, love, disagreement, hatred.

There were 271 comments on 12 posts in total. From these 12 posts, 6 posts were in the elder research participants group and the other 6 were in the younger participants group. Among these comments, 151 comments were from the younger participants and 120 were from the aged participants since they rarely involve in the Facebook interactions as compared to the new generation.

4.1 Analysis of the comments from young participants:

In 151 comments, the participants used 459 emojis of different categories including smileys, animal emojis, body parts emojis, object emojis, heart emojis etc. Given below are the statistics of these emojis.



Among the most used smiley emojis the two frequently used were the “Face with Tears of Joy” and the “Red Heart emojis”. Given below are the examples from the collected data.

Emojis: Face with Tears of Joy 

As described above, one of the most used smileys included the “Face with Tears of Joy” which normally people use when they are replacing the facial expressions of laughing (Danesi,2017). This emoji is performing “Emotive Function” in the written communication and makes the conversation pragmatically competent. Many a times this emoji is also used to perform “Phatic Function” in the written communication i.e. “Silence Avoidance”. While in an ongoing conversation, when an interlocuter wants to stable the pace of a conversation, he/she uses various silence avoidance techniques such as asking about the weather or talking about the political scenarios in the country. In the written communication on digital media, these silence avoidance techniques are used with the help of emojis. Some of the examples used in the data are described below.

The emoji of “Face with Tears of Joy” has been used to convey laughter, seemingly replacing the text-message abbreviation “lol” (laugh out loud) in majority of the communication. It is used commonly in response to a joke or a funny situation (Danesi,2017). Since it is expressing an emotion, so it falls under the category of “Expressive” acts in the taxonomy of Searle (1979). As argued by Dresner and Herring (2010), it is projecting an illocutionary force of happiness, given below is an example.



The collected data has shown many patterns in the usage of emojis falling under various categories of speech acts. Emojis portray diverse communicative functions in the written communication on Facebook. With or without the help of words, emojis convey full meaning in the written discourse. Following are some of the examples from the data.

Example # 1



Emojis: Clapping and Open Hands Emojis

The other most used emojis include the Clapping as a sign of approval or praise projecting the illocutionary force of appreciation. The Open hands have a wide array of semantic connotations from agreement to a prayerful meaning (Danesi, 2017). According to Searle's (1979) taxonomy it constitutes of expressive and representative acts, given below is an example.

Example # 2:



- **Emojis: Laughing Dog (Danesi,2017)**

Illocutionary force of conveying loud laughter on the current situation is projected by this emojis. It is often used to replace the phrase “ha-ha-ha” for laughter. Many a times, it is performing “phatic function” of silence avoidance in a conversation, especially when one doesn’t want to express his/her comments on a certain type of joke. It falls under the category of expressive act (Searle, 1979).

- **Emojis: Sadness (Danesi,2017)**

While engaging in a conversation about something unhappy or any other miserable conditions, interlocuters often use “sad” emojis in order to convey

their feelings without the usage of words. In a written communication, one might lack the facial expressions of being sad which is covered with the help of emojis usage. Sadness emojis displays dejection a lot many times in the written digital communication especially while conversing on Facebook falling under the category of expressive from Searle's taxonomy (1979).

Example # 3:




-
- **Emojis: Loudly Crying Face (Danesi,2017)** 

This emojis displays the illocutionary force of conveying intense feeling of being hurt falling under the category of “expressive” speech act from Searle’s taxonomy. The interlocuters has used this to express extreme sadness and feeling of dejection since they are talking about the possible war that may happen. It expresses that talking about war brings terror among the interlocuters and they are deeply saddened.

- **Emojis: Hearts** (Danesi,2017) 

The heart emojis represent the illocutionary force of showing love and compassion by the participants of a conversation. They come under the category of second most frequently used emojis according to our data collected. It is observed that participants used heart emojis in order to project their love intensity for anything, sometimes eradicating the use of words and inculcating these emojis help to convey the message in a more powerful way. In the given example, the writer is expressing extreme love of his/her land with the help of red heart emojis. They also fall into the “expressive” speech acts according to Searle’s taxonomy (1979).

- **Emojis: Swords** (Danesi,2017) 

The emojis of objects often display the functions they perform in a conversation. In the above example, a participant is indicating the symbol of power by using the emojis of swords. They are used in the context of war talk, where a participant is endorsing the military power of his/ her country. They are displaying the illocutionary force of threatening or showing power in the above example indicating the “commissive” speech act given by Searle (1979).

Example # 4:



Pragmatic Competence of Emojis (Danesi, 2017)

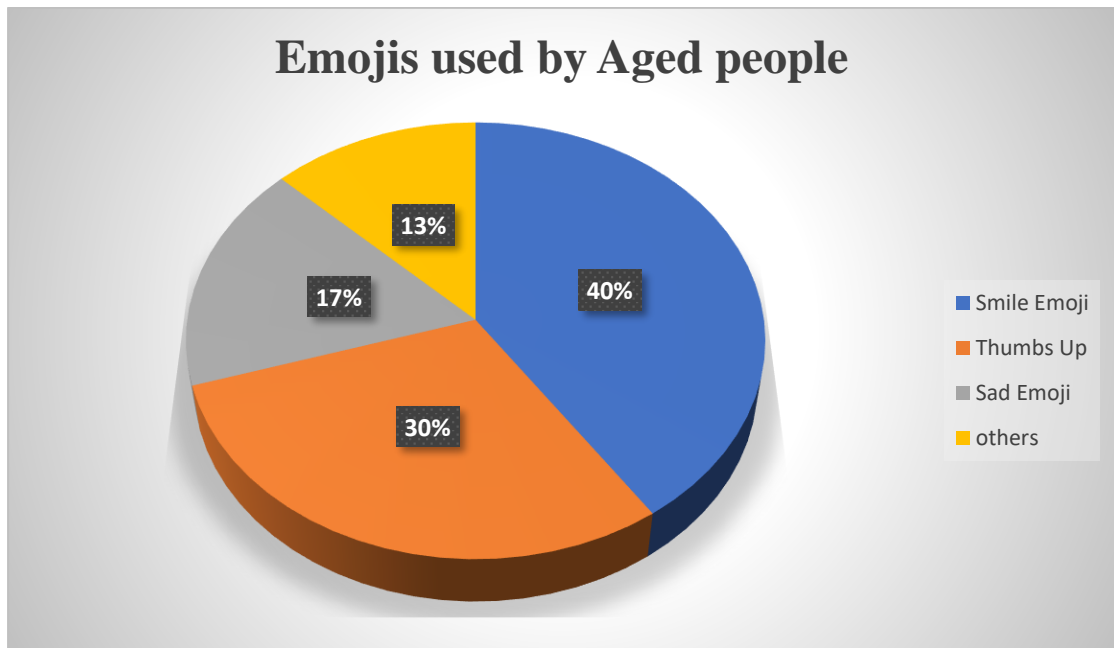
Interlocutor 1 has magnificently used pragmatic competence of emojis in the conversation projecting the illocutionary force of showing power, challenge and ability. He/she has conveyed that an Indian pilot is captured by Pakistani Army. Without using any words, the writer uses various communicative strategies to convey the message. It falls under the category of “Directives” and “Declarative” speech acts Searle (1979).

Emojis of Thumbs Down, laughing out loud and Clapping

Interlocutor 2,3 and 4 used these emojis to project the feeling of happiness, celebration and joy and satisfaction. They are making fun of the Indian forces that they are weak and we have captured one of their pilots. To enhance the feelings in the written communication, the interlocuters took support of these emojis. The use of words is minimum while emojis convey majority of the message. These emojis convey the illocutionary force of celebration and acceptance which comes under the category of “Expressive” and “Declarative” Speech acts (Searle, 1979)

4.2 Analysis of the Comments of People of Age Group 45 Years and

Above:



Generally, there is no such trend of using emojis in the aged people, according to the data collected. However, the people who used emojis used them in the places where there is a need of facial expressions and emojis help in covering the emotions instead of words. In addition to that, emojis used by the aged people are mostly for salutation purposes emphasizing phatic aspects of “utterance opener” or “utterance ender” in a

conversation (Danesi, 2017). The most frequent used emojis are the smile 😊 and

thumbs up emojis 👍 in the aged people conversation. Given below are some examples and their illustration.

Example #1:

May the winds of peace and comfort surround us. may Allah bless the people with wisdom and sense 😊
Like · Reply · 10h 1

Khuda hmaray halat par reham frmayeeee!!!!!!!
Like · Reply · See Translation · 10h 1

↪ - 1 Reply 9 hrs

Indian pEople should stop doing injustice
Like · Reply · 10h 1

Specially Indian media
Like · Reply · 9h

Right you are 👍
Like · Reply · 9h

Example # 2:

This is going to be the biggest lost of humanity ever. May the sense prevails on both the sides!
Like · Reply · 10h 1

Indeed 👍
Like · Reply · 10h 1

May Allah be with us !
Like · Reply · 9h


↪ View 2 more replies

Pakistan and India should resolve their conflicts mutually
Like · Reply · 10h 1

Alas.
We r living in the age of darkness and despondency

Emojis: Thumbs Up and Happiness (Danesi,2017)

In the example number 1, a participant is wishing for peace and wisdom for the nation and added a smile emojis in the end to give a gesture of being positive. The smile, here, is used as “utterance ender” (Danesi, 2016) describing that the message is a wish which should be taken in a positive manner and the writer has no harsh feelings. Similarly, in the second example, the smile emojis indicate a positive affect since it is used just after a prayer that may God be with us. It falls under the category of “Expressive” speech act from Searle’s taxonomy (1979).

In the next comment, a participant used thumbs up emojis in order to agree with the previous interlocuter. He wrote “Right you are  ” which means that he is endorsing the previous comment that Indians should doing injustice.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

4.3.1 AGE GROUP 18-25 YEARS

There are very interesting views of the participants when they are being asked about the usage of emojis on Facebook in daily communication. The main themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews are that; emojis aid to the language, they make the communication easier, they are less time consuming and they have a greater influence on communication and are more effective than words.

Majority of the participants said that emojis are aiding language in many ways, they are reducing the communication gap that occur while using the words. Some of the

participants asserted that many a times they use emojis in order to keep the pace of conversation pleasant.

For example, one of the participants said:

“Me to hasny wala emojis use krte hun taky me saamny waly bandy ko rude na lagou”

Translation:” I use the smile emojis mostly so that I don’t seem rude to the interlocuter while conversing”

Another participant said that:

“I use emojis because many a times I don’t know spellings of specific words”

This was very interesting to know that people try to escape from the nexus of words and communicate through emojis as they display better emotions.

One of the participants added that the main reason of using emojis in daily communication is that they are less time and effort consuming. Nowadays, communication has been digital and finding its new paths towards mankind, emojis include one of those ways.

“they are fast in use because they are present in the keyboard already and I don’t need to write full sentences and find appropriate words”.

Interestingly, in another interview, a participant said that his girlfriend love emojis as they express the feelings better, so he uses them in conversation with her. He added that;

“she is a girl of colors and emotions, using emojis make the communication colorful and more expressive to some extent. When I use emojis she feels great and when I stop

using emojis in a conversation, she knows that there is some serious thing coming on her way”.

4.3.2 AGE GROUP 45 YEARS AND ABOVE

While interviewing the aged people, the perspective was opposite from the younger generation. In the view of aged people, emojis are affecting the language in a negative manner as their next generations are using lesser words and more emojis which are not a part of any language. They believe that there is an arousing change in the traditional concept of communication and it can be misleading sometimes as there are emojis whose meanings are unknown or vary from culture to culture or situation to situation. Some of the participants of this age group didn't even know what these smileys/ emojis are.

Upon asking one of the participants about their usage of emojis, he replied:

“Ye emojis kya hoty han beta?”

Translation: “what are emojis, dear?”.

This explains that there exist a lot of difference in the usage of language in younger and aged people. When it was explained to the participant that emojis are the images present on the keyboard and then was again asked if he uses them he said:

“I don't feel like using them because I don't know what they mean”

Another participant said that she doesn't know why people use these “peeli peeli billiyan” (yellow, yellow cat faces 😊) in the conversation when they can write words and sentences. She further said that they are un-necessary in any writing since we can

use words in order to express what we feel. She argued that language has the basic function of expressing what we feel, so why is there a need of these smileys.

This explains that there exists an enormous difference in the usage of emojis among younger and aged people. Younger generation doesn't take much interest in writing full phrases and sentences rather they prefer using emojis to express what they feel. In addition to that, communication is getting faster these days, people use faster means to communicate and emojis save time and project what the message is. Aged people, however, are not fond of emojis rather they consider it to be a danger to the originality of the written words and language.

Conclusion

This research study was an effort to find out the multiple perspective regarding the use of emojis and reveal what people from different age groups really feel about them. We aimed to uncover the role of emojis in Facebook communication and discover their impact on language. We tried our best to nullify the distractions while conducting the interviews and stay as much neutral as possible. The findings of the study are very interesting since it opens a new perspective regarding the use of emojis on Facebook. Our study shows that there is an emerging change in the usage of language nowadays, emojis are replacing the use of words since they are able to perform various communicative functions like phatic, emotive etc. In addition to that, they perform speech acts which were previously performed only by the words in written communication. They project illocutionary forces in the written communication same ways words do in oral language. Emojis have pragmatic competence similar to the words use in a language. Our statistics showed that "Expressive", "Declaratives" and "Commissive" were the most common speech acts performed by the emojis in daily communication. Moreover, the younger generation consider using emojis as an aid to

language since they save time and effort and express the feelings better than words while the aged people consider them as a threat to the traditional roots of language. So, “Emojification of Language”, is indeed taking place as a new revenue of language and emerging as a rising phenomenon in digital communication.

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