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THE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF CHINESE EMOTICON

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THE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF CHINESE EMOTICON

A Thesis Presented

by

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ABSTRACT

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When the emoticon was created in 1980s, many commentators have even described this creation as futile effort for improving internet communication efficiency. Even in the famous "language and the internet" (Crystal, 2001), the finder of internet linguistic, David Crystal argues that emoticons at the time "are a potentially helpful but extremely crude way of capturing some of the basic features of facial expression, but their semantic role is limited." Nevertheless, after two decades have passed, emoticon not only survived but turned into an irreplaceable linguistic aspect in the internet language. During its evolution process, emoticon was also transmuted into different forms for accommodating specialties in different language input systems. Among all sorts of emoticons which were evolved this way, Chinese emoticons represent many unique characterizations due to the hieroglyphic aspect of Chinese characters, special sound-meaning-form relationship and peculiar input method. This thesis will explore the background and linguistic functions of emoticons, investigate how those special characterizations distinguish Chinese emoticons from others; analyze how Chinese emoticons to fulfill those missing communication properties in Chinese internet language and syntax; discuss the linguistic effects of those Chinese characters which are picked as emoticon, such as the dual effect toward the meaning of character and real life oral

communication; and summarizing Chinese emoticon as a linguistic defined subgroup of emoticon.

Keywords: internet language, communicative property, emoticon, Chinese characters

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

September 19, 1982, a young scientist Scott E. Fahlman encountered some communication problems on his newly developed bulletin board at Carnegie Mellon University net: people there had hard time to distinguish serious posts from jokes, which often lead to misunderstand. Mr. Fahlman's solution to this problem is very straight and simple: he asked every user there to put two signs :-) and :-(before every new topic to differentiate intention of each post. At that time he might have no idea that he accidentally introduced an entire new concept to the internet language world. Smileys, or later on defined with more scientific term, emoticons, began their evolution and spread to the internet world since that day (Fahlman, 1982). Four decades have passed since then; emoticons today not only massively used in daily text based internet conversation but also had grown to be an indivisible and significant division of the internet language around the world.

1.1 Why Emoticons Play such an Important Role in Internet Language?

From communication study point of view, regardless how advanced or complicated technologies are utilized, internet language is still considered as a method of human communication, just as any other traditional communication methods. As a communication system, internet language still tries to achieve the same purpose of communication: exchange information with the most accuracy (Wiener, 1948). And it's still bonded with similar structures rules: thought, encoding and decoding (Clark, 2013).

Due to the nature of internet itself, internet language faces some unique situations in term of communication process. As David Crystal mentioned in his famous "*language and the internet*", the internet language, or net speaking is a text based "oral language" which often "lacks the facial expression gestures, and conventions of body posture and distance (the kinesics and proxemics) which are so critical in expressing personal opinions and attitudes and in moderating social relationships" (Crystal, 2001).

This problem is very critical, since nonverbal communication usually influences communication process much more than verbal communication in most conversation. According to Stubbs K. Hogan's study, non verbal communication represent as much as two thirds among all communications (Hogan and Stubbs, 2003). Therefore, when nonverbal communicative properties are missing in internet language, it becomes extremely difficult for internet user to achieve purpose of communication. Moreover, the immediacy of net interaction and its closeness to speech in formality prohibits Internet communicators to spend lot of time to develop phrasing which makes personal attitude clear like the formal conventions of letter writing in most situations such as instant massager or speedy emails. As a matter of fact, according to Shao-Kang Lo's research, when nonverbal communication factors were purposely set to be missed in internet communication, "most internet user cannot perceive the correct emotion, attitude and attention intent" (Lo, 2008).

Therefore, as soon as the internet communication was developed, there was a need for creations which could replace all missing communicative properties (which included but not limited to pitch (intonation), loudness (stress), speed, rhythm, pause, and

tone of voice) within the time restriction of the internet communication (Flamand, 2008; Giri, 2009). In order to achieve this purpose, many methods such as letter homophones, symbol alteration, onomatopoeic/stylized spellings, were adopted and tested. Nevertheless, one of key component of nonverbal communication, sight pictures, especially the facial expression, could not be represented by any method above.

This caused the missing communication property issue was remaining crucial. Since sight picture represented as greatest factor during process of absorbing the message – about 83% within nonverbal communication, according to Pease's research (Pease and Pease, 2008). With missing of photographic elements and not be able to figure writing as normal writing system due to time constraint, the internet communication still could not function properly and users continued to search for solutions.

The creation of emoticon was just suitable for the job, and it brought a complete new concept to the alphabetical, spelling formed internet. When the emoticon was created in 1980s, many commentators have even described this creation as futile effort for improving internet communication efficiency. Even when two decades passed, David Crystal still argued that emoticons "are a potentially helpful but extremely crude way of capturing some of the basic features of facial expression, but their semantic role is limited" (Crystal, 2006). Nevertheless, another two decades had passed, emoticon not only survived in the internet communication and multiple waves of evolution of technology, but also turned into an irreplaceable linguistic aspect in the internet language. During its evolution process, emoticon was also transmuted into different forms while accommodating specialties in different language input systems, which was very unique comparing with other communication properties, which largely remain the same.

1.2 Why Chinese Emoticons are Significant so There's a Need to Single out Itself as a Research Object?

Just as the internet itself which was created in the US but soon spread globally with great diversities. Emoticon, as an universal tool for internet communication also transmuted into different forms in order to accommodate those specialties of different language input systems. Among all types of emoticons which were evolved in various languages, those from some of the East Asian writing systems represent the most unique characteristics due to the fact that they are all either based on or contain element of logography, not alphabets. This major difference in writing system resulted in many common rules in spelling based written system could not function the same. Therefore some adoptions and changes are needed.

Japanese and Korean encountered internet era first due to their closeness to the western world. And both of them accepted a dual solutions system initially: since both of modern Japanese and Korean already contain certain elements of alphabet, such as katakana and Hangul. On one side both languages raised alphabet elements in the internet communication, such as Japanese assigned its katakana to ASCII keyboard; on the other side, both languages changed certain practices to fit their own culture. The most significant example is かおもじ(Emoji), which is full width (later on turn to halfwidth), vertical faced emoticon.

Chinese history with internet was much short comparing with the two above. In 1996, there're only about 30,000 internet users in China. Comparing with 2014, there're about 657 million internet users in China, about two times population of the United States (中国互联网络信息中心, 2014). This late start provided some technology advancement

when dealing with Chinese writing system. But the hardship still remains: modern Chinese writing system is the only widely used writing system which is mainly based on logography (Boltz, 1994). In order to resolve the same problem faced, Chinese internet users first borrowed and tested experiences from their East Asian precursors, then created its own version of emotion – the Chinese emoticon (表情符号). The Chinese emoticons represented many unique characterizations due to the logographic aspect of the Chinese writing system -- Chinese characters, special sound-meaning-form relationship and peculiar input method. This reflects a very interesting new linguistic aspect: despite the "writing as you speak" characterization of the internet language in common, the actual use of communication property is still heavily influenced on the writing systems.

Moreover, until today, internet leading theory is still dominated by English based theories. That's mainly due to most internet site are still in English despite the users are far more diversified today (Sauerland and Gärtner, 2007). Even Crystal's book treated the issue of online language competition very briefly. Despite Crystal mentions the issue of language diversity and notes that roughly one quarter of the world's languages have some internet presence. And he surveys the topic in seven pages in the Web chapter, providing a basic overview and again adding detail from his own investigations (such as that the first 1000 languages listed in an online ethnology all have obtained a presence on the World Wide Web). He still largely avoids the issue of dialectal and language differences may act differently in linguistic aspects on the internet. Does Crystal intentionally ignore this issue? Or is he conservative on this issue since at the time the book was written the internet was dominated by English? Or maybe he doesn't want to make inaccurate comments on the languages he's not familiar with? There's no clear answer can be

discovered in the book. But one trend I agree with him fully: For languages with few speakers or little telecommunications infrastructure, Crystal hypothesizes that "until a critical mass of internet penetration in a country builds up, and a corresponding mass of content exists in the local language, the motivation to switch from English-language sites will be limited to those for whom issues of identity outweigh issues of information" (Crystal, 2006).

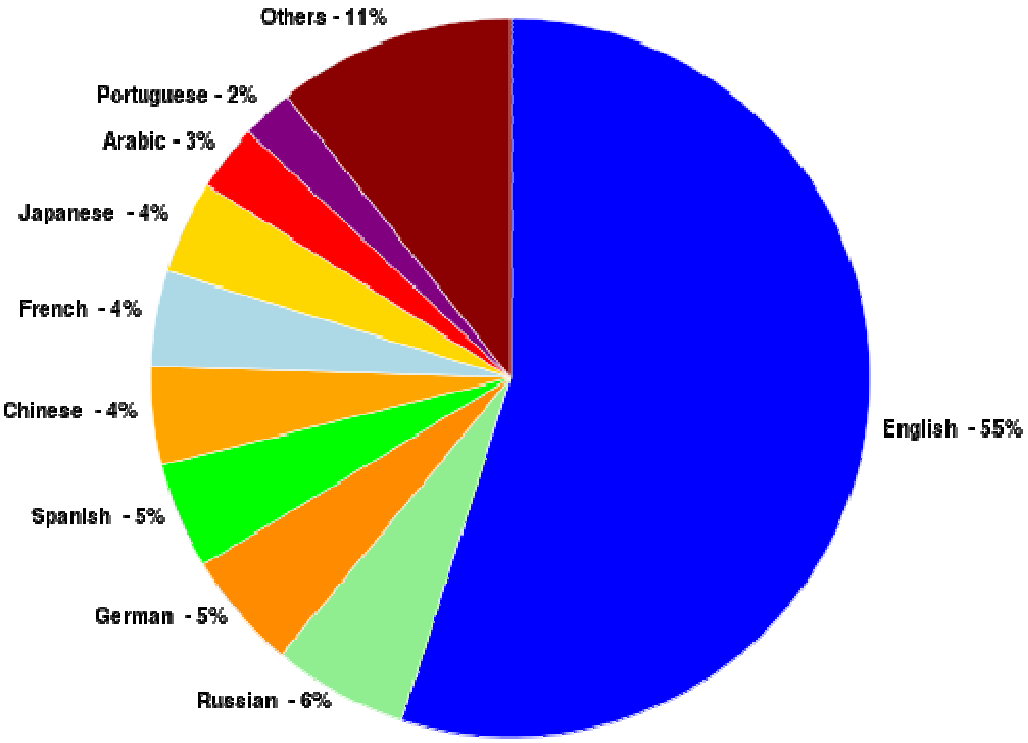

Figure 1: Pie chart of usage of content languages for website (Web Technology Surveys, 2013)

And the mass has reached in certain point. More and more new joined internet users are not English speaking origin. T his already affect the domain of the internet world. At the year 2011, Chinese internet users have occupied about the same percentage

(25%) as English internet users (27%) and still increasing in a dramatic rate (Stats, 2011). If considering there're other East Asian language user groups (Japanese and Korean), the East Asian language internet user groups already surpassed the English speaking internet users in numbers. Therefore, upcoming research on internet linguistics should be refocused toward these languages that "long forgotten" by linguists.

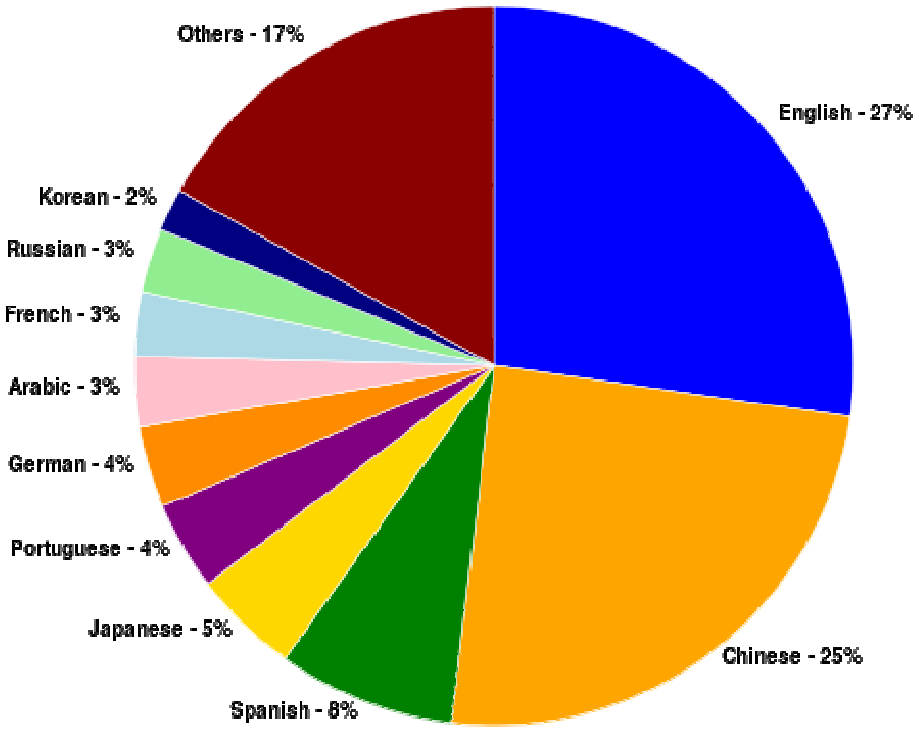

Figure 2: Pie chart of number of internet users by language (Stats, 2011)

Therefore, Chinese emoticons represent many unique characterizations due to the hieroglyphic aspect of Chinese characters, special sound-meaning-form relationship and peculiar input method. This thesis will review the history of Chinese emoticon; examine Chinese emoticon from various linguistic aspects: morphology, syntax and phonology; explore particular linguistic characterizations which distinguish Chinese emoticons from

others; analyze how Chinese emoticons to fulfill missing properties of communication in Chinese internet language while comparing their function with emoticons in other languages (mainly with English emoticons); and discuss the linguistic effects of those characters which are picked as emoticon, such as the dual effect toward the meaning of character and real life oral communication.

CHAPTER 2

FROM LINGUISTIC ECONOMICS TO LOGOGRAPHIC VARIATIONS: A LINGUISTIC VIEW OF EMOTICONS

2.1 Basic Formats of Internet Communication

As mentioned earlier, in the book *Language and the Internet*, David Crystal systematically examines internet communication in linguistics definitions. He compared internet communication with two most traditional conversation methods: writing and speech. In his comparison, factors in typical writing and speech such as time bond/space bond, length of time lag between production and reception, face to face/lack of direct participate, words construction, suitable situations, opportunity to reorganize language, and prosody, are considered and utilized to definite the characteristic of internet communication. From there, he terms internet communication a "third medium" (Crystal, 2006) that shares elements of speech, writing, and electronically mediated properties. And he sums up the most decisive characteristic of internet communication: A text-based oral style conversation, or "written speech" (Crystal, 2006). This sets the tone of any current research on internet linguistic today, and identified internet linguistics as a new branch of linguistics.

Next, Crystal explores a range of internet communication genres. He convincingly describes language use and language change within various internet situations and summarizes five distinct "Internet situations" (Crystal, 2006) that may contain different language use. These internet situations are e-mail, Synchronous chat groups, Asynchronous Chat groups (e.g., bulletin boards), Virtual Worlds (e.g. MOOs and

MUDs), Blogging and the World Wide Web. In each of these situations, different factors like graphic, orthographic, grammatical, lexical, and discourse features are enlisted in order to fit various need of communication. In his book, Crystal chooses to scrutinize those situations individually. Some key notes include:

- E-mail use emphasizes "clarity of the message on the screen" (Crystal, 2006) and has precipitated the now common use of numbered and bulleted lists, a feature rare in earlier written communication. Unlike the memo that preceded it, e-mail is often used as a tool for dialogue and e-mail will exhibit a "much wider stylistic range than it does at present, as the medium is adapted to suit a broader range of communicative purposes"(Crystal, 2006).
- CMC tools of both the synchronous and asynchronous varieties (instant messengers, BBS, online game, etc.) are "both dysfunctionaly and advantageously incoherent"(Crystal, 2006) comparing with traditional writing and speech system. Though numerous features of internet communication have the propensity to drive new user full with confusion and craziness, the new environment that everyone can be the producer of an utterance that upon rereading makes a brand new experience of communication, people, regardless age groups, can adapt well with these new needs, new situations, and new modalities.
- Language use on the World Wide Web and Blogging which is "graphically more eclectic than any domain of written language in the real world"(Crystal, 2006) and one that "holds a mirror up to our linguistic nature, it is a mirror that both distorts and enhances, providing new constraints and opportunities"(Crystal, 2006).

Despite each of these categories contain a different audience size and demands a different level of time urgency, these formats of internet communication present a variety of characteristics of the internet language. Nevertheless, in general, all of these formats demonstrate the following three fundamental elements:

- Instantaneity. Compared with the traditional method of communication, the input of internet language is relatively simple. The processing time between the sending party and the receiving party is shortened into several hours to couple of seconds. Furthermore, the entire process of information transfer involves no editing by a third party, so the sender's original message can be mostly kept while the information can be transferred in a time-efficient manner. Therefore, the information dissemination on the internet is significantly faster than traditional means of communication, such as hand-written letters, a newspaper article and so on (Crystal, 2006).
- Informal. As most of the internet communication is based on text input, while the content of the input is much more informal compared to the formal written style, so we can say that the internet communication contains a double feature, which is the combination of both written and spoken. As Prof. Crystal's definition, it can be considered as a "colloquial language without actual being spoken" (Crystal, 2006). Since the line between writing and speaking is very clear in linguistic term, and most internet communications are based on text, the writing style of internet language can be defined as majorly informal.
- Economical. As most of the internet language "speakers" lack training on professional typing, their speed of typing (input speed) is often far slower than the

speed of their speaking. However, due to the instantaneity and colloquialism style of the internet, the receiving party often demands the same amount information as the amount required in oral communication. Therefore, the traditional written forms cannot meet the need of internet communication, and the internet communication presents very strong economical characteristics at the time of its birth. Therefore we can see the massive usage of mixed coding, homophones and abbreviation in the effort to simplify the words as much as possible. Moreover, elliptical sentences, incomplete sentences and transfer of foreign syntax are commonly used in order to simplify sentence structure (Zipf, 1949).

Although there are numerous dissimilarities between internet communications in different language backgrounds, these three fundamental elements are never changed. These are also the key features of internet linguistics in general. Among them, the economical element, or in another term, the Principle of Linguistic Economics acts as the most significant guideline to internet communication.

2.2 How the Principle of Linguistic Economics Influence the Creation of Emoticons

According to the American linguist Laurence Horn, the Principle of Linguistic Economics includes two aspects when people are engaged in the process of communication (Horn, 1984). The listener theory indicates that the people who listen tend to request the most exact word to understand the expression of the speaker, while the speaker theory indicates that the speaker tends to use minimum number of words possible as long as the listener is able to understand. Furthermore, the American George Zipf also mentioned the Max effect Economical Principles in all kinds of human conversations, or

the Principle of Least Effort, in his article Human Behavior and the Principle of Least Human Effort (Zipf, 1949).

Therefore, as a new branch of human communication, the internet language is also consistent with the Principle of Least Effort. As a matter of fact, in a world where "time is everything", people are striving for the simplification of information exchange more than ever before. Therefore the internet language becomes the first choice due to its characteristics. During internet conversation, internet users often need the morphological simplicity of the language in order to improve the speed and efficiency of information transmission. Hence, people have a tendency to use the fewest words as possible on the semiotic, while trying to express the most exact meaning. The process of finding the expression that is the shortest possible while delivering the greatest amount of information, regardless actual languages used on internet, is a solid evidence and reflection of linguistic economics.

Nevertheless, different as other linguistics that studying based on the combination of sound and meaning, the sound that internet linguistics study often remains silent - it's often only reflected in the reader's brain when the reader reads the text s/he receives, not actually read it out loud. This is caused by the nature that internet communications are mainly based on text. Among six internet situations which are described in Crystal's book, e-mail, Asynchronous Chat groups (e.g., bulletin boards), blogging, and the World Wide Web are still dominantly based on pure text. On the other hand, Synchronous chat groups and Virtual Worlds (e.g. MOOs and MUDs) (Crystal, 2006) may armed with modern technologies and often replace some section of internet conversation with real sound such as WeChat (which equips with sound recording feature) instant messenger, the text based

conversation still remains as major characteristics for them due to the fact that text is more widely acceptable in various environments, for example, in a meeting or classroom.

This mainly text based language grants users tremendous freedom than pure voice communication while generating a dilemma that can't be ignored: the text itself only be able to reflect the verbal communication, and the nonverbal factors in communication cannot be encoded by regular grammar or choice of vocabulary. In traditional writing, nonverbal communication can be figured by different styles of written genres such as time table, additional graphs, or complex formulation. Or the writer may spend lots of inks in their literary works to construct virtual environment to simulate/describe those missing nonverbal communication factors. Nevertheless, most of those skills can't be used during internet communication since the speech nature and linguistic economical factor dooms most internet communication with no time lag or relatively little time lag between production and reception. Just like Crystal (2006) mentioned in his book "The spontaneity and speed of most speech exchanges make it difficult to engage in complex advance planning. The pressure to think while talking promotes looser construction, repetition, rephrasing, and comment clauses."

Table 1: Differences between speech and writing (Crystal, 2006)

Speech	Writing
1. Speech is time-bound, dynamic, transient. It is part of an interaction in which both participants are usually present, and the speaker has a particular addressee (or several addressees) in mind.	Writing is space-bound, static, permanent. It is the result of a situation in which the writer is usually distant from the reader, and often does not know who the reader is going to be (except in a very vague sense, as in poetry).
2. There is no time-lag between production and reception, unless one is deliberately introduced by the recipient (and, thus, is available for further reaction on the part of the speaker). The spontaneity and speed of most speech exchanges make it difficult to engage in complex advance planning. The pressure to think while talking promotes looser construction, repetition, rephrasing, and comment clauses (e.g. *you know, you see, mind you*). Intonation and pause divide long utterances into manageable chunks, but sentence boundaries are often unclear.	There is always a time-lag between production and reception. Writers must anticipate its effects, as well as the problems posed by having their language read and interpreted by many recipients in diverse settings. Writing allows repeated reading and close analysis, and promotes the development of careful organization and compact expression, with often intricate sentence structure. Units of discourse (sentences, paragraphs) are usually easy to identify through punctuation and layout.
3. Because participants are typically in face-to-face interaction, they can rely on such extralinguistic cues as facial expression and gesture to aid meaning (feedback). The lexicon of speech is often characteristically vague, using words which refer directly to the situation (deictic expressions, such as *that one, in here, right now*).	Lack of visual contact means that participants cannot rely on context to make their meaning clear; nor is there any immediate feedback. Most writing therefore avoids the use of deictic expressions, which are likely to be ambiguous.
4. Many words and constructions are characteristic of (especially informal) speech, such as contracted forms (*isn't, he's*). Lengthy co-ordinate sentences are normal, and are often of considerable complexity. There is nonsense vocabulary (e.g. *thingamajig*), obscenity, and slang, some of which does not appear in writing, or occurs only as graphic euphemism (e.g. *f****).	Some words and constructions are characteristic of writing, such as multiple instances of subordination in the same sentence, elaborately balanced syntactic patterns, and the long (often multi-page) sentences found in some legal documents. Certain items of vocabulary are never spoken, such as the longer names of chemical compounds.
5. Speech is very suited to social or 'phatic' functions, such as passing the time of day, or any situation where casual and unplanned discourse is desirable. It is also good at expressing social relationships, and personal opinions and attitudes, due to the vast range of nuances which can be expressed by the prosody and accompanying non-verbal features.	Writing is very suited to the recording of facts and the communication of ideas, and to tasks of memory and learning. Written records are easier to keep and scan, tables demonstrate relationships between things, notes and lists provide mnemonics, and text can be read at speeds which suit a person's ability to learn.
6. There is an opportunity to rethink an utterance while the other person is listening (starting again, adding a qualification). However, errors, once spoken, cannot be withdrawn; the speaker must live with the consequences. Interruptions and overlapping speech are normal and highly audible.	Errors and other perceived inadequacies in our writing can be eliminated in later drafts without the reader ever knowing they were there. Interruptions, if they have occurred while writing, are also invisible in the final product.
7. Unique features of speech include most of the prosody. The many nuances of intonation, as well as contrasts of loudness, tempo, rhythm, pause, and other tones of voice cannot be written down with much efficiency.	Unique features of writing include pages, lines, capitalization, spatial organization, and several aspects of punctuation. Only a very few graphic conventions relate to prosody, such as question marks and italics (for emphasis). Several written genres (e.g. timetables, graphs, complex formulae) cannot be read aloud efficiently, but have to be assimilated visually.

From here, we can clearly see the disadvantage for internet communication: while lacking most prosody from speech, the time restraint factor prohibits it to utilize traditional writing skill to fulfill nonverbal communication factors. Past researches have shown up to 55% of spoken communication may occur through non verbal facial expressions and a further 38% through paralanguages (Mehrabian, 1972), this results nonverbal communication represents over two-thirds meaning transactions of all communication (Hogan and Stubbs, 2003). Therefore, if those nonverbal communication factors are missing in conversation, a significant amount of misunderstanding may occur within internet communication which result catastrophic failure of communication. Indeed this type misunderstanding happened very frequently in the early era of the internet communication. Therefore, various methods were invented and tested in order to fill in those missing communicative properties. They include but not limit to four major styles:

- Letter homophones: They are abbreviations and acronyms. A common abbreviation in internet is a shortening of a word, such as "CU" for "see you". An acronym, on the other hand, is a subset of abbreviations and form from the initial components of a word. Common acronyms in internet include "LOL" for "laugh out loud" or "lots of love" and "BTW" for "by the way". There are also combinations of both, like "rofl" for "Rolling on the floor laughing". Although in the real world there's also acronyms like ASAP, but its usages and variations are much less than the internet environment. Moreover, combination of homophones and punctuations (which will be mentioned next) often forms certain style in order

to represent certain social groups. For example, C~Ya~ often shown it's a girl talking.

- Punctuation, capitalizations and other symbols: These features are commonly used for emphasis or stress. Periods or exclamation marks may be used repeatedly for emphasis, such as "....." or "!!!!!!!!!!". Capitalizations are often used for emphasis also, such as "STOP IT", which can represent a stronger emotion of annoyance as opposed to "stop it". Bold, underline and italics are also used to indicate stress. Common grammatical punctuation rules are also altered on the internet. The example above in letter homophones shows a good example of "~" to be used as a girl's way of extending the sound of ending morpheme at the end of a word . Punctuations are often main element to form emoticon, during that process, they often lose their original grammar functions.
- Onomatopoeic and/or stylized spellings: An onomatopoeic spelling traditionally is a literature skill but also becomes popularized on the internet. One well-known example is "hahaha" to indicate laughter. Onomatopoeic spellings are very language specific. For instance, in Spanish, laughter will be spelt as "jajaja" instead and in Chinese is often represented as "呵呵". Sometimes by deliberate misspellings of onomatopoeic words, different styles of actions/emotions can also be acted. "jajaja" in English can represent an evil laugh while "hohoho" reminds people Santa - in extend a strong old man's laugh.
- Emoticons: Emoticons serves as the most distinguished figures of internet communications. This is due the fact that all others categories mentioned above have been occurred in formal writing, which were existed before the creation of

internet communication. Emoticons, on other hand, were created solely for internet communication, which fit the specific need within internet communication. Emoticons are generally found in web forums, instant messenger communications and online games. While some emoticons are universal global wise, (The best example should be two most famous emoticons: smiley :-) and sadness :-( ) many subgroup emoticons are very culture-specific and certain emoticons are only found in some languages but not in others. For example, the Japanese equivalent of emoticons, kaomoji (颜文字 literally "face marks"), focuses on the eyes instead of the mouth as in Western emoticons. They are also meant to be read right-side up, for example, ^_^ as opposed to English emoticons, which are read sideways, =). And Chinese emoticons utilize massive amount Chinese logographic characters such as 囧. Moreover, emoticons today often expand their borders during the developing process: Different as original emoticons which are only focus on facial expression, other non facial emoticon symbols such as <3 (which is a sideways heart) in English, and 卣 (a hand grenade),凸一一 (a face with figure up) in Chinese have emerged. This new expansion causes emoticon to play even greater and boarder roles in internet communication.

2.3 Emoticon's Linguistic Application

Then the relationship between internet linguistics and major nonverbal internet communication styles can be analyzed. The starting point is the characteristics of nonverbal communication.

According to Argyle et al. (1970), when people use spoken language for communicating information about events external to others, non-verbal communication factors are used to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. In regards to express interpersonal attitudes, humans communicate interpersonal signals through a series of nonverbal actions known as immediacy behaviors. Easy examples include smile, noding/shaking head, active/passive eye contact or ignoring. Argyle concluded there are five primary functions of nonverbal body behavior in human communication (Argyle et al., 1970):

- Express emotions
- Express interpersonal attitudes
- To accompany speech in managing the cues of interaction between speakers and listeners
- Self-presentation of one's personality
- Rituals (greetings)

Those body languages (kinesthetics) often combine with other factors such as use of voice (paralanguage), gaze (oculesics), touch (haptics), distance (proxemics), time (chronemics), and physical environments/appearance to form a whole environment when people talk. And all of them become nonverbal communication.

Since all major nonverbal internet communication styles try to fulfill roles of nonverbal communication factors above, we can find not all of them fell into the field of linguistics (Malandro and Lee, 1983). Matter of fact, due to the fact that there are few assigned symbols in the system of nonverbal communication; nonverbal communication factor should be considered as linguistic or Non-linguistic is a long and continuous fight

in the linguistic field. Nevertheless, this struggle in internet world becomes a much smaller issue, since the entire communication is mainly constructed by text. And traditional linguistic studies the structure of language, especially the pragmatics, which study how utterances are used in communicative acts and the role played by context and non-linguistic knowledge in the transmission of meaning, all text based internet communication styles can be included in this field. My research focus on emoticon, so I will discuss some roles that emoticon plays in internet communication here.

Next, the most common form of emoticon, English emoticon, is examined in order to discover their methods to fulfill most body behavior communication need in an internet conversation.

In general speaking, English emoticon often uses combination of numbers and letters to form facial expression, for example, :-); or body movement , for example, Orz. The most basic emoticons is relatively consistent in form, but each of them can be transformed by being rotated (:-) or ^_^), with or a without hyphen (nose, :-) or =)). By changing letters (mouth expression or eye expression), variations of emoticons change their definitions, like changing a character to express a novel feeling, or slightly change the mood of the emoticon. For example :(equals sad and :((equals very sad or weeping. A blush can be expressed as :"> . Others include wink ;), a grin :D, smug :->, and tongue out :-P Beside facial expression and movement, an often used combination is also <3 for heart, and </3 for a broken heart. Other stylish representations may include but not limited to cat face :3, or mustache emoticon :-{ or :{D (Langer and Davies, 2005).

From here we can clearly see the linguistic functions of emoticons:

- Express emotions – it's one of the main function of emoticons. :-) :-(

- Express interpersonal attitudes -- with every sentence end with a smiley people clearly know the other side is eager and happy in this conversation.
- To accompany speech in managing the cues of interaction between speakers and listeners - the same sentence combine with emoticon can create different environment of speaking. For example: It's sounds great! :-) It sounds great… *_* or it sound g…r…eat >_< can represent three moods.
- Self-presentation of one's personality - combining with different preside emoticons, it can represent gender, interest, and cuteness etc. e.g: ;-) often be used for females.
- Rituals (greetings) : it's common for people to start a conversation with :-) instead of a "hi" (actual language) in internet conversation. Also when apologizing, people often use “orz” to indicate the action of kneel down to apology.

In order to determine the function of emoticon in actual use, Dr. Shao-kang Lo performed a comparative study and published in his paper “The Nonverbal Communication Functions of Emoticons in Computer-Mediated Communication” (Lo, 2008). In his research, he purposely divided internet users into three controlled group, and provided same text message with different amount of emoticon. The receivers needed to interpret those messages with their own understanding. Then he compared and analyzed correct matching percentage from original intention. The result clearly indicated that with more emoticons involved in the message, the more accurate interpretation can be reached. He concluded that when nonverbal communication factors, especially emoticons, were missed in internet communication, “most internet user cannot perceive the correct emotion, attitude and attention intent”.

Table 2: Effects of emoticon on receiver's perception

Dependent variable	*Independent variable*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
(a) Effects of emoticon on receiver's perceived emotion					
Perceived emotion	Pure Text Set	46	0.13	0.65	0.001*
	1st Emoticon Set	47	3.21	0.62	
	2nd Emoticon Set	44	−3.09	0.60	
(b) Effects of emoticon on receiver's perceived attitude					
Perceived attitude	Pure Text Set	46	0.20	0.62	0.001*
	1st Emoticon Set	47	2.87	0.54	
	2nd Emoticon Set	44	−3.07	0.59	
(c) Effects of emoticon on receiver's perceived attention					
Perceived attention	Pure text set	46	0.044	0.67	0.001*
	1st Emoticon Set	47	2.96	0.66	
	2nd Emoticon Set	44	−3.14	0.59	

*$p < 0.05$.

It's worthy to notice that despite emotions can fulfill most primary functions of nonverbal bodily behavior in human communication which defined by Argyle. There're limitations for emoticon's linguistic function: Emoticons in most situations only can reflect the pragmatic segment of nonverbal communication, such as facial expression, eye contact, kinesthetic (body language and posture), and small part of paralanguage (speaking style). Common stylistic functions such as prosody (including rhythm, stress and intonation) and some paralanguage elements (voice rate, pitch) can't be represented by emoticons and left to other internet slangs like onomatopoeic, punctuation, and homophones.

It is also noteworthy that most emoticons are pictures, but not all pictures are emoticons. A picture of swimming in internet conversation may clearly present a motion to a reviewer. However, it only serves as a figure to aid conversation and carries equivalent meaning as descriptive text. Hence, only pictures represent those nonverbal communication elements which mentioned above can be identified as emoticons.

Moreover, one significant element of emoticons is that elements which composing emoticons in most languages often lose their grammar function during the forming process. A good example used is :-O (surprised) and orz (kneel down apologize or worship). In these emoticons, none of alphabet or punctuation functions as their original grammar, but is only used by their graphic appearance.

On the contrast, the components of internet slang may look similar to emoticon, since they're often composed by alphabets, punctuations and number. However, they function fully with their represented text meaning. For example, CU = see you. rofl = roll on floor (laughing) etc.

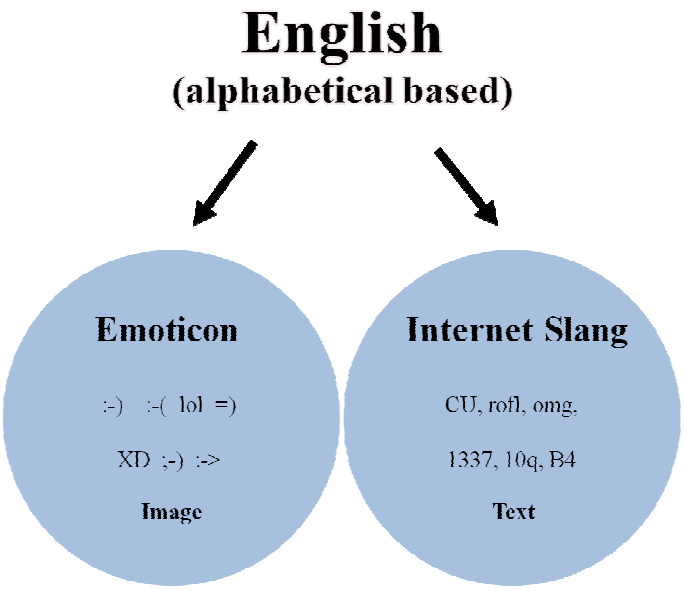

Figure 3: Relationship between emoticon and internet slang in English

Therefore, there's a clearly distinguishable line between emoticon and slangs in English and most spelling based languages. In addition, internet slangs in English are most often composed by abbreviations and acronyms in order to save typing time. Good example of abbreviation is "CU" for "see you ", and example of acronym can include

"LOL" for "laugh out loud" and "BTW" for "by the way". Regardless abbreviations or acronyms, letters in internet slang always represent a word with actual verbal meaning, while on the other hand letters in emoticon only express by their graphics and have no actual verbal meaning at all. The distinguish come from the nature of language. Since most languages such as English are based on phonograms which writing is formed by spelling of alphabets, and those alphabets contain very limited graphic information. When it comes to texting process in internet communication, a separation between slang (actual meaning) and emoticon (graphic) is unavoidable (Hale and Scanlon, 1999).

2.4 Unique Linguistic Characteristics of Chinese Emoticons

Among all emotions in all languages, Chinese emoticons stand exceptionally in their linguistic function. That's due to the nature that the Chinese writing system is the only major logographic system left in the world today. Despite the fact that none of the current logographic writing systems in the world is truly ideographic or pictographic, there’re still large amount Chinese characters are originated from ancient pictograms, which presents visual symbols of the actual matter. People may think the elements may co-exist in Korean and Japanese, but they’re incorrect due to the fact that the pool of Chinese characters in those languages is relatively small:

Korean Hangul letters are used by both North and South Koreans. They grouped into blocks, which are similar as Chinese character, but it’s actually a spelling language which each block consist of two to five letters, including at least one consonant and one vowel. Therefore, their logographic element is very similar to alphabet system rather than Chinese characters. On other hand, Hanja, which is Chinese characters used in

Korean, is still used by South Korean only. A total of 1,800 hanja are taught in basic education system (Hannas, 1997).

Japanese Kanji, does use either Chinese characters and self created characters. The number of Chinese characters used in Kanji is better than Hanja but still smaller than Chinese itself. For example, there are only 2,136 jōyō kanji (常用漢字, lit. "frequently used kanji") designated by the Japanese Ministry of Education for basic education purpose (The Japan Times, 2008).

On contrast, any known Chinese basic education system requires students with secondary education to understand 3500 – 4800 characters cross Chinese world (Mainland, Taiwan, Hongkong etc.) (Lee, 2000; PRCMOE, 1988; ROCMOE, 1979). And this is only considered "basic education." Most adult with higher education can read and use well the Chart of Generally Utilized Characters of Modern Chinese (现代汉语通用字表), which lists over 7,000 characters(PRCMOE, 1988). Moreover, there's an ancient pool of characters can be chosen. Numerous long-forgotten characters may be revived for the new use. How many are there? Zhonghua Zihai (中华字海) may give us an answer since it is the largest Chinese character dictionary available for print today. This dictionary consists of 85,568 different characters, if counting with variants; the number can be reach as high as 106,230 (Leng, 1994).

Therefore, it's worthy to notice that Chinese emoticon is exceptional in linguistic function in compare with emotions of other languages. Since in Chinese the bond between graphic and meaning is much closer than phonogram languages, while there're much bigger potential pool of character can serve as reserve. This causes slang and emoticons in Chinese internet language are much blurry comparing with other internet

languages. Due to the fact that many of its characters often contain both of pictograms and morphemes (DeFrancis, 1984), a special subgroup - character emoticons, which often use one or both characterizations of Chinese logographic characters, are formed in Chinese internet communication. This subgroup is so unique, that no other emoticons in other languages contain similar linguistic functions.

And these dual characterizations between image and text meaning also create a co existing area between Chinese internet slang and emoticon. Different as their English counterparts which can be distinguished easily thru graphic and text meanings, Chinese character emoticon need to be analyzed carefully for reclassification.

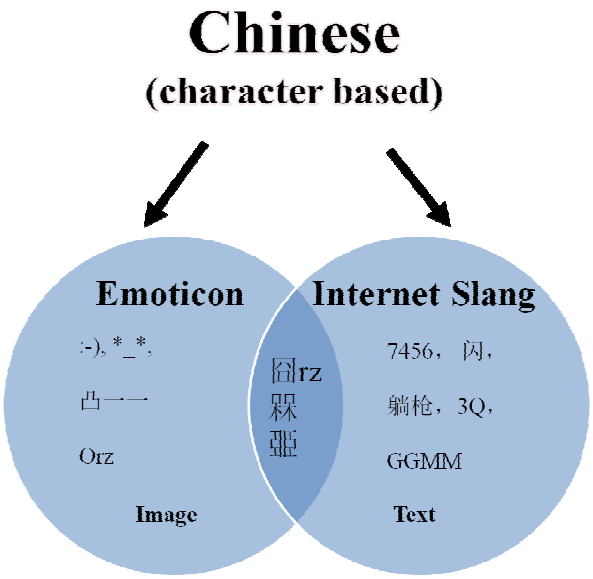

Figure 4: Relationship between emoticon and internet slang in Chinese

For this reason, analyzing the form and linguistic function of all Chinese emoticons alone with character emoticons certainly become the subject of study and main context in next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF CHINESE CHARACTER EMOTICONS

3.1 Chinese Emoticons, Choice of Typing System

In the chapter above, a brief discussion about differences between Chinese emoticon and emoticons of other languages is analyzed. However, since most language did started with adopting the original emoticon style from English, people may wonder why East Asian internet languages, particularly Chinese, formed a completely new style of emoticon by its own?

The answer may be quite simple: input methods. During an online conversation in Chinese, it requires the internet user to take extra steps in order to switch between Chinese and English in put method. If he or she ever wants to key in English emoticon, frequent switch between input methods is unavoidable. Due to the time constrain and complication of language settings, this frequent switch often becomes unpractical, especially in an intense conversation. Moreover, all East Asian characters, regardless Chinese, Japanese or Korean are required to be represented in full width encoding system in the early era. Today Chinese input system is still the only input system solely depends on full width structure due to its huge number of characters while both Japanese and Korean already found half width solutions. The biggest problem of full width input system is that the signs are not able to achieve the same visual effect as normal half width letters due to the additional space that full-width sign occupies (Consortium, 1991):

For example, A half width emoticon :-(

may appear in full width as ： - （

Since emoticon is largely based on emotional punch from visual effect, this lost visual effect can be fatal. As a result, in order to achieve the same effect as English emoticon, Chinese net speakers have to create their own emoticons based on Chinese characters and full width signs in order to accommodate their linguistic demands within online conversation. After decade of creation and natural selection, three unique categories of emoticons can be identified: Character emoticon; full-width sign emoticon and combinative emoticon. Different from most emoticons of all languages which express their meaning through only pure figures, Chinese emoticons express their meanings not only through their figures but also often based on the combination effect their pronunciation and their radicals.

3.2 （一▽一），Full-Width Emoticon

The Origin of full-width emoticon is mentioned briefly above: Full-width coding (全角) input system is a special feature for East Asian character input system. For a number of practical and aesthetic reasons, all East Asian characters, regardless Chinese, Japanese or Korean, would need to appear as twice wide as normal Latin based alphabets during encoding decoding process of the early computer system.

Example:

A half width character, punctuation etc:

abc ,.:

A full width character, punctuation etc:

ａｂｃ　　，。：

At the same time, many commonly used punctuations, numbers, and English alphabets also encoded into full-width format alone with those characters for convenient reasons. When the technology advances, both Korean and Japanese develop certain methods, such as Half-width kana or Half-width Hangul characters, to return to the half width format in order to line up with English and other language input systems. However, due to the complication of Chinese characters, the conversation of Chinese input system to half width still remains as mission impossible, therefore both simplified and traditional characters remain as complete full-width character until today.

The problem is, as mentioned above, when internet users try to use those full-width sign to create the traditional emoticons which are based on half-width alphabet, they often not be able to achieve the same visual effect as normal half width letters due to the additional space that full-width sign occupies. In order to resolve the problem, early Japanese internet users created full-width emoticon. One of the most significant character of this style is all emotions become vertical （︶^︶） instead of horizontal, ex. :-). This change of directions opens a complete new aspect for emoticon in East Asian internet languages. And it becomes one of the most significant differences between English emoticon and East Asian language emoticon. According to Yanbi Liang, in East Asian internet languages, the basic shape of the vertical full-width emoticon and its variation forms are often vertical, presenting front face, and focusing on changes in the eye (Yanbi, 2006). But the basic western emoticon symbols are always horizontal, presenting the side face, and focusing on the change of the mouth. Since all emoticons, regardless what kind, mainly imitate of facial expressions in order to achieve their linguistic function. The creators will be deeply influenced by facial aesthetics in their

culture. For Westerners, the noticeable, three-dimensional faces are considered as standard of beauty. Western emoticons are also created through side faces in order to advocate this three-dimensional beauty. In contrast, the side-face is considered as precise weakness for Asians due to the flatness of face. Therefore, traditional oriental aesthetic for face is always front, not side. And the vertical emotions also reflect this point.

Today the full-width Chinese emoticons include combination of Chinese characters, full-width numbers, punctuations and often other signs. And since full width emoticons mainly exist in the Chinese character input regions, it already becomes one of the significance of Chinese internet language. (Despite full-width emotion began and flourished in Japan, Japanese emoticons today are largely based half width emotion but still kept vertical characterization, such as ^_^). Here are some examples for typical full-width Chinese emoticons:

╮(╯▽╰)╭ whatever (character, sign combination)

(╯(工)╰) big Bear (character, sign combination)

(╯ 3 ╰)▬ ξ smoking (character, sign, number combination)

(⊙ - ⊙) surprise (sign combination)

The most extreme case will often include Chinese characters with its verbal meaning as decoration in order to attain the effect:

◢▬▬▬▬崩 ╰(〒皿〒)╯ 溃▬▬▬◣*

* Word “崩溃“means to fall apart. Combining with the emoticon facial expression, it consolidates the effect of entire picture. However, this type of emoticons often needs to be premade before use and copy/paste when in need. So they’re used

rarely due to complication and lack of instantaneity at the beginning. However, considering this type of emoticon expression is still relatively faster comparing with writing an equivalent description paragraph. In certain situations, they're still used by internet speakers for the purpose of expression individualism.

More and more Chinese "smart" input programs equip the full width emoticons in their systems make those complicated full width emoticons, not half width emoticons, much easier to access. For example, the Sogou input system, one of the most popular input system in China, has many characters such as "啊" (pronounce as a, 1st tone) with option of full-width emoticons (⊙ o ⊙) . Just like MS word default choice of :-) with ☺ but on a much board scale. This also indicates that the full width emoticons alone with Chinese character emoticon became the domination in Chinese internet language.

Some pre-designed emoticons includes:

Table 3: Pre-designed emoticons

Emoticon	中文	English
<(￣﹃￣)>	得意	Be proud of
[]~(￣▽￣)~*	干杯	cheers
(￣ˇ￣)	满足	Satisfied

Table 3 Continued

Emoticon	**中文**	**English**
(￣ ___ ￣)	困倦	sleepy
(￣ε(#￣)	被打脸	Get slap in the face
(￣.￣)	无语	Speechless
╮(￣▽￣)╭	无奈	Whatever
Σ(°△°ǁ)⸘	惊讶	Surprise
(=￣ω￣=)	猫脸	Cat face
(￣▽￣)"	寒	Chill
<(￣ ￣ ￣)>	生气	Angry
(￣o￣) . z Z	困	sleepy
(￣ c ￣) y▬ξ	抽烟	smoking
╰(‘□′)╯	暴怒	Fury
(﹏^﹏) =凸	竖中指	Middle finger

Table 3 Continued

Emoticon	中文	English
(ノ ー_ー)ノ ┻━┻	掀桌	Too mad so kick off table
(┬_┬)	哭泣	Cry

3.3 Relationship between Martian Language (火星文), Abbreviation (拼音简写) and Chinese Character Emoticons

Martian language is the nickname of purposely staged unconventional representation of Chinese characters online. The term of "Martian" clearly indicates its irregularity in forms. The Martian language originally created in Taiwan around 2000 (周凤五, 2007), but later on widely used in Mainland. On one hand for time saving purpose, for example, characters such as 曼 尨 怒 覂, their radicals combinations are words existing in Chinese language (只要，火化，好心，不要) by typing one character, the netizen can eventually save up 50% of typing time. On the other hand, the dividing method, which is similar to "leet" method in English counterpart, was widely implied to avoid Chinese intent censorship. For example, 枪 may get transformed into 木仓 in order to pass auto censoring system, which often be blocked for online publication if violated. Other similar common use includes Chinese official's name (胡锦涛 = 古月金帛水寿),

or words may draw net police attention (翻墙 = 番羽土啬). Since many Chinese character emoticons are composed in similar methods, many people are recognizing them as the same. However, if we distinguish them by linguistic functions, it's not hard to find that Martian language scripts are still obtain their literacy meaning and with no visual element. In contrast Chinese emoticon always represent visual element and sometimes contain certain degree of literacy elements, which will be discussed below.

Aside from Martian Scripts, abbreviation from Pinyin (拼音) is also frequently used in Chinese internet due to their typing efficiency, such as 傻逼 (stupid, pinyin is Sha Bi) can be abbreviated as "SB", 姐妹（older and younger sisters, pinyin is Jie Mei） can be abbreviated as "JM"/"JJMM" etc. Since emoticon such as "orz" are often composed by alphabets, they often are misunderstood as internet slang together. But just as Martian Language, Pinyin abbreviations present with full literacy contents and no graphic element. For example, when people pronounce pinyin abbreviations, they still pronounce the entire character out, not only the alphabet nor combination of the sound (such like AWOL in English). Hence, despite the visual similarities between pinyin abbreviation and some emoticons, their linguistic functions are far apart.

3.4 囧, Character or Figure? Classifications of Character Emoticons

Despite Chinese writing system is broadly considered as the most ancient and the last remaining major logographic writing system in the world, many characters today have already lost their logographic elements during thousands years of developing process. However, the arriving of the internet and increase demand of expression methods changes this trend. Chinese emoticons bring many lost pictographic elements

back to life while revive many long-forgotten Chinese characters such as “囧, 槑” into daily life once again.

As previously described, emoticons of most internet languages are presented mainly in figures, which means the morpheme element often loses its linguistic aspect. For example: Orz. (O presents head, r is body and arm and z is body and leg) However, due to their logographic heritage, Chinese emoticons act quite different with counterparts in other languages. The actual meaning of Chinese characters itself, or even the meaning of their radicals, often play very important roles in Chinese character emoticons. With this mixture of image-text relationship, those emoticons which involve characters or their radicals need to be defined as character emoticons and regrouped more closely (Figure 2).

By analyzing Chinese character emoticons text-image relationship, it can be classified into five large groups by their linguistic active component:

- Text meaning imagination/alteration 汗，寒， 雷 (meaning alteration)
- Radical meaning extension 靐, 槑 , (all morpheme)
- Shape Meaning alteration 囧 (both),卣 (logographic)
- Complex combination 噩 茵 rz (both)
- Pure figurative image 凸一一 (logographic)

Although all of them serve in similar syntax structure (which will be discussed in later on sections) and perform analogous linguistic functions. Their formations demonstrate considerable differences.

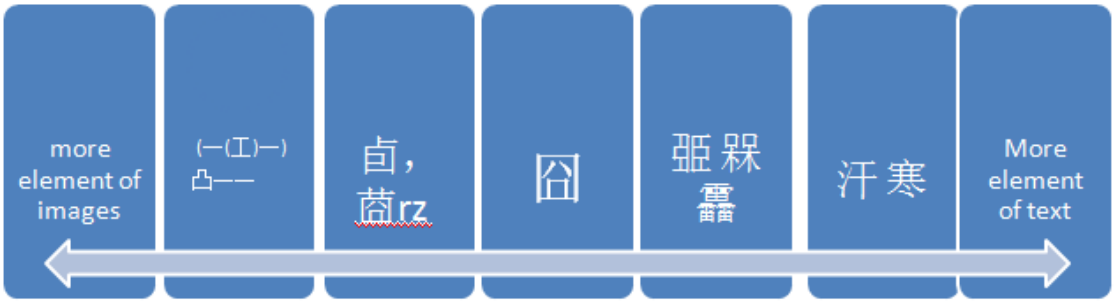

Figure 5: Chinese character emoticons from graph to text

The first subcategory is text meaning imagination/alteration. In this category, characters don't contain any actual figurative element. However, their meaning/altered meaning often triggers user's imagination. Therefore, they're used as emoticon to express feelings. Some examples of text meaning imagination include "晕" (pinyin: yun 1st tone; fainted due to embarrassment); "哭" (crying due to given condition); "汗" (sweating due to given condition) "寒" (chilled due to given condition)etc. Those characters often can be represented with more figurative emotions, etc. 汗 = ⊙_⊙b

The perfect example for text alternation is 雷 (Pinyin: Lei 2nd tone). The original meaning of character 雷 is thunder. However, When the English word "shocked" was translated into Chinese, its dual meaning (shocked by electric/thunder or shocked as emotion) triggered people's imagination. Therefore, 雷 is turned into a verb as "shock" by Chinese internet users. And it can be used individually as emoticon to represent the emotional stage of shock or serve as morpheme in phrase such as 雷人雷语 (people and language that can shock others)

Another similar example is 晕 (Pinyin: yun, 1st tone). Its original meaning is dizzy. When English word "faint" was translated into Chinese, the internet users believe this character can perfectly represent its meaning "close to losing consciousness" (which original translation was 昏倒). Today it's used individually to reflect the reaction of shocking information or news.

The second subcategory is radical meaning extension. Distinct from the Text meaning imagination/alteration group which is used solely based on the literal meaning of characters; the meaning extension group is utilized based on those characters that serve as radicals within the characters. In this subcategory, there're two situations: the radical characters meaning alternation group, such as 靐 (pronounced as bing 4th tone); and the racial characters original meaning group, such as 槑 (pronounced as mei 2nd tone). However, both situations involve multiply same radical character in order to increase some visual effect.

In Chinese writing system, complex Chinese characters are often based on radicals. But many radicals are common used characters. So when a racial character receives a new meaning, it often results a change of meaning for those complex characters that contain this racial character. If we just based on this definition, 囧 and 茴 (which will be discussed later on) may also be considered as this group. However, both of them are missing the second required element: the meaning alternation of complex character has to be the result of meaning change in repeated radical characters. For example, 靐 is composed by three 雷，and 槑 is composed by two 呆. Since both of 囧 and 茴 receive the new meaning through their ideographic appearance and there's no

“extension” of repeating characters within them. They still are characterized as meaning alternation group, which will be discussed later on.

The radical characters meaning alternation group indicates that the change is from the racial character directly, the complex characters simply enlarge the effect of their radical character. From first subcategory we know the character “雷” (pronounced as lei, 2nd tone) originally means thunder. And the modern usage in internet grants it new meaning as a verb “to be shocked emotionally”. This change caused the character “靐” (Pronounced as bing 4th tone) , which is a combination of three “雷”, to be interpret as the extreme level of “雷” by visual. Chinese internet users altered its meaning from “the sound of thunder” to “to be shocked emotionally in extreme”.

The similar case includes:

“犇” (pronounced as ben, 1st tone), originally means “to run”. Its radical character is “牛” (pronounced as niu, 2nd tone). the original meaning of 牛 is bull. However, the modern stock market term “bull market” (Chinese translation 牛市) grant the character with the new meaning “awesome” to the modern Chinese. Therefore, since 犇 contains three 牛, its meaning also becomes “extremely awesome”.

On the other hand, the racial characters original meaning group indicates that the meaning alternation of complex character is occurred due to the original meaning radical characters. In this group, the meaning of radical characters will remain the same as original, but the meaning of complex character will lost its original meaning but become an extension of radical characters. “槑” (pronounced as mei 2nd tone) is a good example. It originally means plum, and serves as synonym for common used character”梅” (mei,

2nd tone). Since its structure contains two Chinese character “呆” (dai, 1st tone)， which means dullness, stupid; the character 槑 was also given the new meaning of “further magnitude of dullness”.

It’s noteworthy that despite both 雷 and 呆 are still functioned with their literal meaning in Chinese internet communication since their physical appearance has no direct relationship with its morpheme at all. However, 槑 and 靐 have lost their positions in Chinese syntax due to their rarity. In most the case, they only serve as a form of emoticon.

For example:

- 靐， 那个是生的不能吃！(@_@!, that’s uncooked and can’t be eaten!)

The third subcategory is meaning alternation. Or the word “ideographic” is best to describe this group. All characters within this group are chosen due to their outer appearance, regardless of their original meanings. However, due to their physical appearance, their meanings are finally altered due to their appearance. The most distinguishable example in this category is 卣 (pronounced as you, 3rd tone). Its original meaning is a type of ancient container that commonly used in Shang and Zhou dynasties. Because the shape of this character is very alike a modern hand grenade. Its meaning is altered from container to hand grenade or extension into man with bomb.

Some other famous examples include the famous 囧/冏 (both of them are pronounced as jiong, 3rd tone, writing style difference). Both characters are so ancient that can be back traced to oracle bone inscriptions.

The origin of 囧: same character in different era: (from left to right: oracle bone inscriptions, inscriptions on ancient bronze objects, Qin Dynasty official calligraphy, and modern Kai style calligraphy (刘迎霞，2009)).

They originally represent the meaning of "bright and shining". During the evolution of Chinese characters, they're gradually replaced by a synonym character 炯. However, due to the fact that both their shapes look like a confused, embarrassed facial expression, Chinese net speakers picked them out from dictionary and used as emoticons to express the confusion and embarrassment. One of an important reason is that they coincidentally have the same pronunciation as the character 窘, which actually means confusion and embarrassment. With the both visual and audio element, common people begin to believe that 囧，冏 and 窘 are synonyms. But the fact is the third one has nothing to relate with first two originally. This misusage of 囧 had become so popular; the Chinese academic society was forced to accept this misused meaning as the new standard and wrote it into the newest official Xinhua dictionary. This is very historic since no other commonly used web based character ever be recognized as official format. Moreover, since 囧 often serve as a radical in many other characters, those characters often picked for the usage other than their original form. For example, 菎 (pronounced as meng, 2nd tone), original meaning is fritillary, new meaning is an embarrassed person with a hat, or embarrassed official (the 艹 serves as a crown). Those characters with combination of other element formed the next subcategory: the Complex combination.

The fourth subcategory, also most complex subcategory is combination/mixture. In this category, characters often combine both figurative and literal elements. Sometimes both of the character's radical meaning and outer appearance need to be analyzed while its original meaning is often altered into a new meaning. The best example for this category may be "䖒" (pronounced as guang, 4th tone), with original meaning is "to violate". The most noticing part is its radical. The right side radical character is "臣" (pronounced as chen, 2nd tone), means "subject or minister", but the left side radical simply doesn't exist as Chinese character. It's just a mirror image for radical on the right side. Many Chinese net speakers still consider the non-character left radical as another "臣" with opposite directions. Based on this understanding and the image of the whole complex character, the net speakers invent a new interpretation for "䖒": Since the character is figured as two "臣" sit back to back, and "臣" often contain the hidden meaning of "groveled minister", the new meaning of "䖒" become "two faced, or double dealer".

Different as 䖒, 囧 rz family went to another path despite fell into the same concept of visual meaning mixture. Those combinative emoticons not only include different forms of Chinese characters but also with half-width alphabets, numbers, signs etc, which is needed to be specially pointed out.

As mentioned before, In order to accommodate the specific environment for online conversation in Chinese, Chinese internet users created character emoticons and full-width emoticons as the replacement of those English ones. However, just as the influence of internet language affects globally, the spread for those newly created

emoticon in other internet language can't be stopped by the mere difference of input method. But again, when those newly created emoticons reach the Chinese internet language, they're forced to twist themselves in order to fit in. For those combinations of character emoticons and full-width emoticons with similar imported emoticon design, they can be identified as combinative emoticons.

The most eye catching example in recent days is the Japanese imported "Orz" (Boing, 2009). "Orz" is a Japanese origin emoticon representing a kneeling or bowing person, with the "o" being the head, the "r" being the arms and upper half of the body, and the "z" being the lower half of the body and the legs. This stick figure represents two meaning in different situations: It can be interpreted as failure and despair, while it's also often used for representing a great admiration (sometimes with an overtone of sarcasm) for someone else's view or action. Because its cuteness and figurativeness. "Orz" spreads into the internet around the world like a wild fire and it becomes standard emoticon in many different internet languages today. Chinese internet language also adopted this emoticon, but Chinese net speakers replaced the head "O" with Chinese character "囧". This change is not simply for more fun but with real life consideration: first, since Chinese is vowel-tone based language, typing "o" (which is a vowel in Chinese) will automatically trigger the Chinese character selection process, and it's required to take extra step in order to shut down the process for getting "o". At the same time constant such as "r, z" can be typed directly. Secondly, the first meaning of Orz is used more frequently in Chinese online conversation due to the fact that kneeling to a person because of admiration is simply not a Chinese tradition. The Character 囧 not only represents the shape of head but also reflects the facial expression. As the result, the

combinative emoticon 囧 rz replaced original Orz and become more often used emoticons in Chinese online conversation.

Furthermore, the story doesn't ends here. Today Chinese net speakers created an entire new family of 囧 rz based on same structure but with many other additional meanings (People's Daily, 2013). They include but not limit to:

- 崮 rz (king 囧 or embarrassed male high official /boss)
- 茴 rz (queen 囧 or embarrassed female high official /boss)
- 商 rz (embarrassed while wearing a hat)
- 囧興 (a disappointed turtle, or very embarrassed so crawl away)
- 囚 rz，(so embarrassed that the person hide his eyes and mouth)
- 囮 rz，(a embarrassed wry mouthed person)
- 囤 rz ，(so embarrassed that having nothing to say, thus taped his mouth)

Despite those creations are very unstable and frequently changed by various users, the concept of "囧 rz" still remain intact. Since there're over 100,000 characters in the reserve pool and many of those rare characters still carry other than their meaning outer appearance. Therefore, we can certainly expect this ideographic style combinative emoticon will appear more in the future.

Another famous but unfamiliar example will be the "汗" (han 4th tone, meaning sweating) family. Its extended online meaning is "sweating due to various reasons, especially embarrassment". Due to a variety of degree, it becomes a wording game but performing function as emoticons:

- 汗 （sweating, severity: normal）
- 大汗 (big sweat, severity: advanced)
- 瀑布汗 (sweat like water fall, severity: extreme)
- 成吉思汗 (the Genghis Khan, since its meaning is the greatest Khan, same pronunciation as han in Chinese, it represents the greatest "sweat" ever)

From introduction above we can see the complexity and unusualness of this category. This is due to the transition factors between literacy and pictography within the Chinese characters themselves. Despite some are represented with more logographic elements while others carry more literacy terms. Those examples are hard to classify into other groups. So I put them into one group and exam individually.

The last subcategory is figurative image. In this category most Chinese characters completely lost its original meaning and completely become part of a picture, except those most accident characters which still represent its meaning from logographic era, such as 口, which means an open mouth. This group also is the most linguistically related with emoticon in all other language, such as "XD" in English. For example:

- "凸一一" means to disdain. The charter "凸" simulates the middle figure while the 一 一 represent eyes. Within this figurative image, all Chinese characters lost their original meaning.
- "一口一" means to yawn. The "一" here still represent as eyes. But the character "口" acts as its original meaning: mouth.

- “(一(工)一)” represents a bear. The character “一” (originally means one) is the eye, and character “工” (originally means work, industry) represent nose and mouth.

As mentioned above, all five categories mentioned above just draw a transitional line of Chinese characters between pictograph and literacy. And they reflect the uniqueness of adopting ability of emoticons. Since there are thousands characters remain in old dictionaries, while people’s imagination are limitless. We can certainly expect new style emoticons appearing more often in the future.

CHAPTER 4

CHINESE EMOTICONS IN SYNTAX

The internet language had certainly become the new challenge in the new millennium to all linguistics and languages in the world. The massive flow of intercommunication online not only improved interaction between cultures but also dramatically increased the chance of interference/influences between different languages. Therefore, despite the differences of origin, many internet slangs, emoticons and linguistic postures often co-exist in various internet languages thru the influence of internet. Sometimes they do alter their forms in order to accommodate the need of new environment, just like emoticons in Chinese internet language. But there's one question in general remains: how those newly created/spread verbal/nonverbal elements influence the internet communication in syntax of different languages?

In order to answer this question, there're numerous studies about emoticons' place within syntactic structures of various languages in the past decade (Amaghlobeli, 2012). As for emoticons, key argument and analysis focus on the location within syntax, while pronunciation in reading will also be examined as supplement. Since there are syntax structural differences between various languages, comparison analysis across languages is often conducted. Many linguists also hope this study can assist them to find some common grounds in all internet communication with various language origins. The assumption is, although internet languages have each own base text. However, the missing nonverbal communication factors are very identical. Even with the most pictographic writing system – Chinese are mainly functioned based on the writing script/characters, not their logographs. Therefore, with massive intercommunication with

various languages and generalization between replacements of nonverbal elements online, the appearance of internet language should appear with more similarities.

The researches so far are very promising. All researches so far reached similar conclusion that regardless the differences between emotions of various language, their positions in syntax are significantly identical, which indicates that with massive communication the universal rules of communication are forging in identical ways regardless the actual language differences. Azuma and Ebher (2008) even proposed a possible universal educational application based on the use of emoticons.

Chinese emoticons also can be tested for common ground with counterpart of other languages. Since Chinese text script is widely apart from other commonly used languages in the world such as English or Arabic. By analyzing Chinese emoticons' syntax structures, further examinations can be conducted for their linguistic function by comparing with other languages, here English is chosen as the counterpart.

Like other non-verbal communication styles mentioned before, emoticons can support the verbal context as well as express themselves independently. When emoticons are used with sentence, their nonverbal elements can eventually alter the meaning of message. This function is one of the key functions of emoticons regardless languages. These are similar examples of text-emoticon combination between Chinese and English:

- Ok 好
- Ok :-) 好 ^_^
- OK :-/ 好 囧

In general speaking emoticons fulfill certain non-verbal communication elements in a given sentence. As Natia Amaghlobeli (2012) described "Emoticons express the

para-verbal or non-verbal elements. They are not pronounced, but are expressed through non-verbal devices, such as mime, gesture and intonation." Functions of emoticons often served in sentence as:

- Additional of para-verbal element to messages I was late to school :-(
- Redundancy Congratulations! :-)
- Antiphrasis That's so good. :-(
- Entire Turn (when emotioncs serves the purpose of an entire message)

  A: I have to cancel the trip today. B: :-(
- Syntactic marker Thanks :-) so we will meet this afternoon? :-)

All Chinese emoticons can fulfill similar roles as Amaghlobeli describe above. However, due to the dual roles of Chinese character emoticons in both figures and meanings, many of character emoticons can be pronounced in the sentence while they're serving as emoticons, while other non character Chinese emoticon types act same way as "not pronounced". Examples include:

- 囧，你这么晚才来？ *_*b， you're back so late.
- 你竟然吃了一个烂水果! 靐 You dare to eat a rotten fruit. @_@!
- 我今天起床好早 ^_^ I get up early today. :-)
- A: 我掉泥坑里了 A: I fell in a mud pond
- B: 囧 B: *_*b

Regardless "pronounced or not", Chinese emoticons in general function the same in actual syntactic structures. Therefore, the concept of Amaghlobeli's "non-verbal emoticon" can still apply to Chinese emoticons in general.

On other hand, Amaghlobeli also classifies “verbal” use of emoticon. (Amaghlobeli, 2012) This new “verbal” emoticon often substitutes a word or phrase with emoticon. But when it needs to be pronounced, it still pronounces as the actual word

For example: :-*) me can be pronounced as “kiss me” instead of “me”.

The problem is, this type of “verbal” emoticons in most situations just a common recognition within certain limited groups. They’re by far lacking of board acceptance by the internet world comparing with their “non-verbal” counterpart. A “:-*)” is much less understandable than “:-)” or “^_^”, not considering the pronunciation part. Even within the English net speakers outside those limited groups are very unlikely to understand those emoticons’ message, and misinterpretation is highly possible. And Amaghlobeli also admit that is “new and less common” in English or French (Amaghlobeli, 2012).

Chinese characters emoticon also carry similar “read as you see” situation, but with much less complications. Since Chinese characters are originated from logographs, the characters are able to carry figurative and literacy information at same time. And those messages are widely accepted by all Chinese speakers. In another word, much less ambiguities may occur. There’re many examples of a Chinese character can be used both as emoticon or actual verb/noun. (However, they can’t function at same time). 囧 can serve as a good example:

“裤裆裂了让他囧死了。” The translation is “The broken crotch of his pant makes him so embarrassed.” In this sentence, the word “embarrassed” should use the character 窘 originally. More people today use 囧 as substitute, which eventually altered its original meaning. Here 囧 function as a verb, not emoticon, but certainly its figure does carry certain message.

“囧, 我裤裆裂了。” The translation is “ -_-b, my pants has a broken crotch.” In this sentence, 囧 serves as emoticon and does not directly perform function in the sentence.

Despite figure/verbal co-existence of Chinese characters and many characters can serve both text and emoticons occur more frequently in the sentences than spelling based language such as English or French, it’s still relatively uncommon for an emoticon other than character emoticons to appear within a sentence structure.

Here we can sum up some usage of Chinese emotions:

- Chinese emoticons, just as emoticons in other languages, most often appear at the beginning or end of a sentence/phrase.
- The character emotions can replace certain words/phrase as verbal components while others not that often, just as English counterpart.
- In many cases, emoticons function as punctuation such as period to indicate end of sentence/phrase. However, they can’t replace other punctuations which carry non-verbal communicative properties, such as a question mark or exclamation mark.
- Different as punctuations, which most of them have to follow a sentence, emoticon can exist independently as a morpheme, regardless they’re figurative or characterized.

These characteristics above represent great similarity with English counterpart in syntax structure. Therefore we can reach the conclusion that despite they are greatly apart in formats; Chinese emotions do serve identical roles in syntax as emoticons in

other languages such as English or French. Some common grounds of emoticons usages can be determined in syntax of many language analyzed.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

As Crystal defines internet communication as a text-based oral style conversation, or "written speech" in his book Language and the Internet, the theory of internet communication should be recognized as a special form of language is widely accepted by linguists. Since linguistics is the scientific study of language, this new language study that focuses on styles and forms under the influence of the internet and other New Media is identified as internet linguistics.

Although Language and the Internet set the foundation of internet linguistics, written era of this book still staged in an early stage of decade's long, continuous and rapid development. The book was originally published in 2001, and revised in 2006. However, in comparison to all of the media available as means of communication, the genres and data utilized in Crystal's book are relatively "old" and limited comparing today.

Also due to the limitation of the time, Crystal's research on those missing communication factors is very brief. And limited data he obtained may draw some conclusions that today's linguistic researchers disagree of. Such as Crystal argues that emoticons at the time "are a potentially helpful but extremely crude way of capturing some of the basic features of facial expression, but their semantic role is limited." The fact is, since the creation of first emoticon :-) in 1982, the emoticons have already developed into huge families with hundred types and tens of thousands signs. They also became an irreplaceable section of internet language and carried many key linguistic aspects for online conversation. They're so common that according to Chinese Bureau of

Language and Character Commission, the usage of emoticon in conversation occupies 55.07% in the online conversation, which had surpassed the usage of Chinese writing scripts (Xinhuanet, 2005). This makes emoticons as an unavoidable segment in internet language, especially in Chinese internet language.

From the analysis above, there's a noticeable fact need to be addressed. Despite there's significant differences in formation of structure between Chinese emoticon and emoticon of other languages, their syntax function are very identical. Even Chinese character emoticon may carry the literacy meaning due to its dual roles of character and emoticon, the percentage of this type usage in Chinese emoticons are so small that result de minimis. Certainly this can be interpreted as all internet languages are heavily influenced by English, which result similarities in use. However, there're many dialects/styles/languages competitions during Chinese internet language development process. During this process, Cantonese, Taiwanese, Japanese internet languages alone with Chinese local dialects were all participated in the competition. Hence, the level English internet language influences Chinese counterpart can still remain as the topic of debate. In my opinion, Chinese internet language alone with Chinese emoticons reflects the result of natural choice. It clearly reflect the outer influence while still contain its core language structure.

That's also why I hope this research can provide some partial answers to those questions that Crystal didn't answer in his book. By comparing between Chinese and English emoticons, some helpful patterns that how different internet languages evolve according to their languages of origin may be drawn and assist future studies to understand our languages in the "new" cyber world.

APPENDIX: COMMON CHINESE EMOTICONS

常见网络表情符号用字表

汉字网络用法	拼音	原意	网络意义
囧	jiǒng	古同“炯”，明亮有神	尴尬、无奈、真受不了、被打败了
槑	méi	古同“梅”	很呆、很傻、很天真
卣	yǒu	古代容器	手雷，潜在意义滚蛋
亞	guàng	违背	两面派
茵	méng	草药	带草帽的囧脸
汗	hàn	出汗	窘迫而出汗
寒	hán	冷	窘迫而打寒颤
晕	yūn	昏倒	因刺激而昏倒
吐	tù	呕	因被恶心而反胃
靐	bìng	雷声	很“雷”（取英语 shock 的意思）
犇	bēn	奔	很牛

Common use full width/half width vertical emoticons from Wiki Chinese

表情符号	意思
(>_<) (>_<)>	苦恼
(';')	婴儿
(^^ゞ (^_^;) (-_-;) (~_~;) (・。・;) (・_・;) (・・;) ^^; ^_^; (#^.^#) (^ ^;)	紧张、尴尬、陷入困境、害羞、滴汗
.。o○ ○o。.	泡沫
<ㅋ:彡	乌贼
(^。^)y-.。o○ (-。-)y- ゜゜゜	抽烟
(-_-)zzz	睡觉
(^_-) (^_-)-☆	眨眼
((+_+)) (+o+) (゜゜) (゜- ゜) (゜. ゜) (゜_ ゜) (゜_ ゜>) (゜ㄴ ゜)	困惑
(o|o)	超人力霸王
<(｀^´)>(´∩ ｀。)(；′⍰`)	傲慢
^_^ (゜o ゜) (^_^)/ (^O^) ／ (^o^) ／ (^^)/ (≧∇≦)/ (^o^)丿 ∩(・ω・)∩ (・ω・) (´･ω･`) ^ω^	快乐

(__) _(._.)_ _(_^_)_ <(_ _)> <m(__)m> m(__)m m(_ _)m	叩头或下跪
(° °)～	蝌蚪
(^^) _U~~ (^^) _旦~~	一杯茶
☆彡 ☆ ミ	流星
＼(° ロ ＼)コ コ ハ ド コ？ (/ ロ °) / ア タ シ ハ ダ ア レ？	“我在哪里？”、“我是谁？”
> °)))彡 (Q)) ><ヨ ヨ (°))<< > °))))彡 < °))) 彡 > °))彡 <+))><< <*)) >=<	鱼
('_') (/_;) (T_T) (;_;) (;_; (;_:) (;O;) (:_;) (ToT) (Ｔ▽Ｔ)	悲伤、哭泣
(一_一)!! (-.-) (-_-) (一一) (；一_一)	羞耻
Ｃ:。ミ	章鱼
(=_=)	累
~> °)～<!---->～～	蛇
～ °・_・° ～	蝙蝠
(=^・^=) (=^・・^=) =^_^=	猫

(..) (._.)	向下看
^m^	毗牙
(・・? (?_?)	混淆
>^_^< <^!^> ^/^ （*^_^*） §^。^§ (^<^) (^.^) (^ム^) (^・^) (^。^) (^_^.) (^_^) (^^) (^J^) (*^。^*) ^_^ (#^.^#) （ ^ ― ^ ）	微笑
(^^)/~<!---->~~ (^_^)/~ (;_;)/~<!---->~~ (^.^)/~<!---->~~ ($ ・ ・)/~<!---->~~ (@^^)/~<!---->~~ (T_T)/~<!---->~~ (ToT)/~<!---->~~	挥手
●～*	炸弹
(V)o￥o(V)	V 字手势
＼(~o~)／ ＼(^o^)／ ＼(-o-)／ ヽ(^。^)ノ ヽ(^o^)丿 (*^0^*)	兴奋
(*_*) (*_*; (+_+) (@_@) (@_@。 (@_@;) ＼(◎o◎)／!	惊讶
(-_-)/~<!---->~~ピシー!ピシー!	打发
!(^^)!	高兴
(*^^)v (^^)v (^_^)v (^▽^) （・∀・） （ ´∀｀） （＾▽＾） （^ v ^） （’-’*)	笑、开朗

(~o~) (~_~)	累
(^^ゞ	挠头
(p_-)	单片眼镜
(-"-) (ーー゛) (^_^メ) (-_-メ) (｀´) (~_~メ) (ーー゛) (・∧・) <`～´> <`^´> (ーー;)	担心
(^0_0^)	眼镜
(..)φメモメモ φ(..)メモメモ	注意
:-P :-O |:3 ミ :-> 8-< :-) :-< :(:-(:) :| :-|	俏皮
（●ˆoˆ●） （ˆvˆ） （ˆuˆ） （ˆ◇ˆ） (^)o(^) (^O^) (^o^) (^○^))^o^((*^▽^*)	开心
（￣ー￣）	不屑
（￣□￣；）	惊讶
（*´▽｀*） (*°∀°)=3	迷恋
（ ゜Д゜） （ ゜◇ ゜）	震惊、惊讶
（ ⊃ Д⊂）(/∀＼*))♪ (*/ω＼*) (´つヮ⊂) (つ///д///⊂)	掩面

(*￣m￣)	不满
ヽ（´ー｀）┌¯_(ツ)_/¯	无所谓
(‘A`)	冷落或贬低
(*^3^)/~☆	飞吻
.....φ(・∀・＊)	努力读书
__|￣|○ STO OTZ OTL orz	失意体前屈。“O”和“o”代表头部、“T”和“r”代表身体、“S”和“z”代表脚。
(ﾉ °□°）ﾉ ︵ ┻━━┻ (/""≡ _ ≡)/~┻┻ (ﾉ ―‿―) ﾉ （ ┻━━━━┻ (ﾉ ′□ ｀)ﾉ ┫ ：･'･：｡┻━┻：･'.：┣･･･：｡ ┬┬☆	翻桌
m9(^Д^)	嘲笑
m(_ _)m	叩头或跪下以表示尊敬、抱歉
(´･ω･`)	被冷落、泄气
(`･ω･´)	得意洋洋
__|￣|○	放弃
(｀-´)>	敬礼

(´；ω；`)	非常难过
ヽ(´ー｀)ノ	让心灵平静下来
ヽ(`Д´)ノ	烦躁
(#゜Д゜)	愤怒
（´Д｀）	大喊、喘气中
（ ゜Д゜）	惊讶、吼叫
┐('～`；)┌	不知道答案
（´∀｀）	无忧无虑
（ ´_ゝ`）	无所谓
Σ(゜д゜;)	吃惊
(゜ワ゜)	快乐
ｷﾀ━━━(゜∀゜)━━━!!!!!	一般的表情，出现了令人兴奋的东西或“我来了”
ｷﾀﾜｱ*･゜゜･*:.｡..｡.:*･゜(n‘∀‘)η゜･*:.｡. .｡.:*･゜゜･* !!!!!	意思同上，不过是女版的。还有另一种是“在这里”
⊂二二二（ ^ω^）二⊃	无忧无虑、自命不凡的

(*´Д`)ﾊｧﾊｧ	色气的
(´Д｀)ﾉ(´･ω･`) ﾅﾃﾞﾅﾃﾞ	轻拍
(((；゜Д゜)))	受惊
Σ(゜Д゜)	吓一跳
(´∀｀)σ)∀`)	轻推别人的脸颊
（・∀・）ヾ(- -;)ｺﾗｺﾗ	埋怨
(゜д゜)	惊叹
(´ー`)y-~~	吸烟
（^_^）o 自自 o（^_^）	干杯
m9(・∀・)	放闪光弹、用直觉觉得
ヽ(´ー`)人(´∀｀)人(`Д´)ノ	表达友好
('A`)	孤独
（´,_ゝ`)	沮丧、不满意
（´-`）.。oO(...)	正在想事情
(゜Д゜;≡;゜Д゜)	不耐烦

(´д)ﾋｿ(´Д｀)ﾋｿ(Д｀)	窃窃私语
（・∀・)つ⍰	炫财
⊂（゜Д゜⊂⌒｀つ≡≡≡(´⍰;;;≡≡≡	在别人肚子附近滑动，因受惊吓而“哇！！”地大叫
(゜д゜)	感到意外
(゜⊿゜)	“我才不需要”
щ(゜Д゜щ)(屮゜Д゜)屮	“来吧”
（・∀・）	嘲弄，“好样的”
（・Ａ・）	“这不好吧”
(゜∀゜)	玩玩而已
（ つ Д ｀）	伤心
ｴ ｴ ｴ(´д｀)ｴ ｴ ｴ	没有说服力
(￣ー￣)	傻笑
(゜∀゜)ｱﾊﾊ八八ノ丶ノ丶ノ丶ノ ＼ / ＼/ ＼	邪笑
[゜д゜]	失去兴趣

♪┌(・o･)┘♪└(･o･)┐♪┌( )┘♪└(･o･)┐♪ ┌(･o･)┘♪	高兴、随着音乐舞动
d(*⍰▽⌒*)b	高兴
__|￣|○, STO OTZ OTL	绝望，“O”或“o”代表贴在地上的头，“T”或“r”，而“S”或“z”则代表腿部
(╬□益□)	极度讨厌，旨在呈现一个夸张的鬼脸
(≧ㅁ≦)	叫喊
(ΘεΘ;)	假装没有注意、因为厌倦所以睡着了
┌(；`～,)┐	困惑
ε=ε=ε=┌(;*´Д`)ﾉ	跑步
ヽ(´▽`)/	高兴
^ㅂ^	高兴
(l'o'l)	吃惊
ヽ(ｏ`皿′ｏ)ﾉ	真的很生气
o/ o_ o/ o_	“在这里”

(☞゜ワ゜)☞ ☜(゜ワ゜☜)	“做吧”
☜(⍰▽⌒)☞	天使
(□° □□ □°)	臭美，用于洗版

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