SOUTHEAST ASIAN JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Volume 3, Issue 1, 2018
P-ISSN: 2672-2984
E-ISSN: 2672-2992
www.sajst.org

Knowledge in Emoticons of the ABEL Students

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Abstract *–. This study aimed to determine the level of Knowledge in Emoticons of the AB English Language Students of Pangasinan State University, Lingayen Campus. Specifically, it sought to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex, Internet Enabled Devices, Social Networking Sites Access and reason for using emoticons. This study, in the same manner, also looked into the frequency of the use of emoticons and significant difference between the levels of Knowledge in Emoticons across the profile of respondents. Descriptive method of research was utilized in this study. The respondents of the study were forty (40) regular and irregular Second Year AB English Language Students who were selected through random sampling. The study used survey questionnaire as tool in gathering the data needed which was employed and adopted to some reliable sources, and asked some help to those who are knowledgeable in terms of computer mediated communication to guide the researchers in making the questionnaire. The questionnaire used by the researchers was validated by the Statistician and Thesis Adviser as the main instrument in gathering and collecting data. The study revealed that Smartphone is the common internet enabled device owned by ABEL students. Facebook is the most common social networking site where they frequently use both the animated and traditional emoticons when expressing their emotions. Based from the findings, the researcher recommended that emoticons could be considered as a technique for teaching so that the teaching and learning process could be made more enjoyable and interesting and may result to an effective communication between the students and the teachers. However, both the teachers and the students should first be knowledgeable on the meanings of these emoticons because failure to understand may also mean misunderstanding.*

Keywords *– Animated and traditional emoticons, Computer Mediated Communication*

INTRODUCTION

Technological advancement has demonstrated a dramatic shift regarding how individual communicate. Through communication we have different mediums we use for us to express everything we wanted to say including happiness, disappointment, opinions, status, thoughts, or encouragement. Face to face interaction is almost disappearing; we now live in a time of accelerating change. We 'type', we press 'send' and instantly the message shows up on someone else screen. Responses to such message often need to be instantaneous. Sometimes, message cannot be easily understood, and it takes time for us to know the real meaning of the message. By this, a new form of expressing our thoughts and emotions is formulated; it is through the use of emoticons.

Emoticons are the digital text icons that visually represent facial expressions and may indicate the self-reported mood or emotional state of a user within CMC or Computer Mediated Communication (Antonijevic, 2005; Crystal, 2001; Walther & D' Addario, 2001). One aspect is that computer mediated communication can lack the visual and auditory cues we experience face to face. It can become harder to convey or interpret emotions where communication is just a text. The introduction of emoticons can provide visual 'signals' of how the user feels without the need to expressly describe this in words. While these nascent symbols appear as cartoon-like representations, serve a variety of important functions: emoticons affect interactions positively, influence message meanings, manage impressions, and supplement nonverbal (Adams, 2013).

Much has been written, conducted and studies that focused on grammar, however the use of emoticons the so called 'smileys' on perception processes were not given importance wherein fact it is popular to all in this digital age . This study requires us to know how often individuals use emoticons in their daily conversation in their gadgets/devices and how they interpret it. Generally, emoticons are use as non-verbal emphasizer of emotions without answering the questions as to whether these emoticons are universally understood. The main aim of this study is to focus on respondents' level of knowledge in emoticons and to know whether there is a 'universal understanding' between the users and the receivers of it. Basically we use emoticons and sometimes we misinterpret the meaning of it that could result in misunderstanding somehow.

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Volume 1, Issue 1, 2016
P-ISSN: 2672-2984
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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to determine the level of knowledge in emoticons of the AB English Language students of Pangasinan State University. It also considers the respondents' profile in terms of: Age; Sex; Internet enabled devices; Social Networking sites; and, Reason for using emoticons. This study also looked into the students' frequency of the use of these emoticons and its relationship to the given profile variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used survey questionnaire as tool in gathering the data needed which was employed and adopted to some reliable sources and asked some help to those who are knowledgeable people in terms of computer mediated communication to guide the researchers in making the questionnaire. The survey questionnaire used by the researchers was validated by the Statistician and approved by Thesis Adviser to ensure categorized data. This was to determine the level of knowledge in emoticons of the respondents and make an analysis of it. Questionnaire type of instrument had been chosen as research instrument because it measures information levels, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, ideas, feelings and perception.

Aside from primary gathering tool stated above, the researchers also used the internet, books and other unpublished research studies related to the study in order to get necessary and helpful information needed in order to supplement the facts needed in this study.

The statistical treatment of data involved the use of frequency count and percentage distribution, Weighted Mean, Likert Scale, descriptive equivalent and One-Way ANOVA or F-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Table 1 shows the distribution of frequencies, percentage and means of the respondents in terms of their profile like age, sex, internet enabled devices, social media access and reason for using emoticons.

It indicates that majority of the respondents are within age bracket of 18-20 years old, with the 77.5% or 31 out of 40 respondents. This is followed by those within the age bracket of 21-23 years old, with 5 respondents' equivalent to 12.5%. The remaining 4 respondents, equivalent to 10%, are within the bracket of 24 years old and above. It implies that the second year AB English Language students are 18-20 years old dominated. It further shows that, 22% or 9 out of 40 respondents were male, while 78% or 31 out of 40 respondents are female.

It also indicates that majority of the respondents used Facebook as their Social Networking Sites Access which has the highest frequency of 40 or all the respondents. It is followed by Messenger with the frequency of 37 out of 40 respondents, while the lowest frequency is Twitter with 12 out of 40 respondents. Based on the accumulated data, Facebook got the highest frequency so meaning to say that, all of the respondents have their Facebook Account because it's very common networking sites and most of the people nowadays have their Facebook.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents are using emoticons 'to express emotions' which has the highest frequency of 30 out of 40 respondents. It is followed by the reason, 'to make the text easier to understand' with the frequency of 13 out of 40 respondents. Meanwhile, no respondent answered 'I find it hard to use words'. In addition, only 1 respondent answered 'to give the text some art'. Based on accumulated data, it implies that respondents reasoned out that using emoticons is to express their emotions. It is supported by Shatha Ali A Hakami, 2017 that using emoticons is to effectively express opinions, feelings and personality that cannot be expressed easily in a written text. According to Kato and Scott, 2009, emoticon usage decreased when people felt extreme emotions of anger or guilt, showing a tendency to drop emoticons for emotionally intense situations.

Table 1 *Profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and internet enabled devices, social networking sites accessed and reason for using emoticons*

AGE	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
18-20 years old	31	77.5
21-23 years old	5	12.5
24 years old-above	4	10.0
Total	**40**	**100%**
SEX	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	9	22.5
Female	31	77.5
Total	**40**	**100%**
Internet-Enabled Devices	**Frequency**	**Ranking**
Smartphone	35	1
Laptop	12	2
Tablet	9	3
IPhones	3	5
Desktop	5	4
Social Networking Sites Accessed	**Frequency**	**Ranking**
Facebook	40	1
Instragram	21	6
Tweeter	12	8
Messenger	37	2
Text Messaging	31	3.5
Yahoo	15	7
Google/Gmail	25	5
YouTube	31	3.5
Reason for using Emoticons	**Frequency**	**Ranking**
To make the text easier to understand	13	2
To express emotions	30	1
They are fun	9	3
To enhance	3	4
Others	1	5

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Table 2 indicates that most of the respondents are Fairly Knowledgeable in animated emoticons with the highest frequency of 25 out of 40 respondents. However, two of the respondents are Slightly Knowledgeable. Based on the gathered data, no respondent was Not Knowledgeable and Very Highly Knowledgeable in animated emoticons. The result did not simplify that respondents are in the middle level or have enough knowledge to identify what is the meaning of animated emoticons but most of the respondents got lower score. So, the percentage or result was scattered and descended.

On the other hand, Table 2 also shows, that most of the respondents are Fairly Knowledgeable in traditional emoticons with the frequency of 27 out of 40 respondents and no respondent was Not Knowledgeable and Highly Knowledgeable. In general, with the mean of 2.75, the respondents are Fairly Knowledgeable on the use of traditional emoticons.

Table 2 *Level of Knowledge of the Respondents according to Emoticons*

	Level of Knowledge							
Emoticon	**Very Highly**	**Highly**	**Fairly**	**Slightly**	**Not**	**Total**	**Mean**	**Descriptive equivalent**
animated	0	13	25	2	0	40	3.28	Fair
traditional	1	0	27	12	0	40	2.75	Fair
Average Weighted Mean						**40**	**3.02**	**Fair**

Table 3 shows that out of 40 respondents, 37% with the highest frequency of 15 respondents are **always** using emoticons. This is manifested by the use of emoticons to the messages, which shows that they could easily express their feelings or emotions. It also shows that the frequency of Always and Often are very close. It implies that those students are using emoticons in their daily communication.

Table 3 *Frequency of use of Emoticons*

Degree	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Always	15	37
Often	14	35
Sometimes	10	25
Seldom	0	0
Never	1	2.5
Total	**40**	**100%**
Mean	**4.05**	
Descriptive Equivalent	**Often**	

Table 4A shows that in Animated Emoticons, the profile of the respondents and the level of Knowledge in Emoticons have the significant value that higher than the 0.05 alpha level of significance was computed; the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This shows that the respondents have no significant difference with the level of Knowledge in Emoticons of Second Year AB English Language students in terms of animated emoticons.

When it comes to variable sex, there is no significant difference between the level of Knowledge in Emoticons in terms of animated emoticons that has significant value of .084 which higher than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Male respondents are more knowledgeable than female respondents in animated emoticons not only because of their mean. But, it implies that if the mean of the male respondents are higher, there was a possibility that most of them will get high score. The mean of female respondent was lower than male maybe because most of the female got lower score than the others. The percentage was scattered and descended because of not equal numbers of the female respondents score. In short, male respondents got higher score than female respondents. The data also implies that they have difference with each other maybe because of the total respondents in male and female are not equal.

Table A. *Difference between the Profile Variables and the Level of Knowledge in Animated Emoticons*

Emoticon	**Profile Variables**	**Mean**	**Sig.**	**Interpretation**
Animated Emoticon	**a. Age**		.870	Not Significant
	18-20	3.26		
	21-23	3.40		
	24-above	3.28		
	b. Sex		.084	Not Significant
	Male	3.56		
	Female	3.19		
	c. Internet enabled devices		.164	Not Significant
	Smartphone	3.26		
	Laptop	3.33		
	Tablet	3.56		
	IPhones	3.67		
	Desktop	3.20		
	d. Social Networking Sites Access		.445	Not Significant
	Facebook	3.25		
	Instagram	3.33		
	Twitter	3.33		
	Messenger	3.24		
	Text Messaging	3.29		
	Yahoo	3.00		
	Google/Gmail	3.28		
	YouTube	3.32		
	e. Reason for using emoticons		.711	Not Significant
	To make the text easier to understand	3.15		
	To express emotions	3.30		
	They are fun	3.11		
	To enhance	3.00		
	Others	3.00		

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Table 4B shows that in Traditional Emoticons, variable sex has significant value of .035; Internet Enabled Devices has a significant value of .000 which less than 0.05 alpha level of significance was computed. This means that these profiles variables of the respondents have something to do with the Level of Knowledge in Emoticons of the Second Year AB English Language Students of Pangasinan State University, Lingayen Campus; the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This shows that these profile variables of the respondents has a significant difference with the level of Knowledge in Emoticons of Second Year AB English Language students in terms of traditional emoticons.

When it comes to the difference between the male and female respondents, they have differences in the level of knowledge in traditional emoticons because the results are not that quite far but still male respondents have higher knowledge. It implies also that even though there are no equal total respondents in male and female their level was still the same or male respondents more often in using emoticons in their non-verbal communication.

Table 4.B also shows that the age of the respondents, Social Networking Sites Access and Reason for using Emoticons of the respondents have higher significant than the 0.05 alpha level of significant. This means that this profile variables and the level of Knowledge in traditional emoticons of the Second Year AB English Language students have no significant across them.

Table 4B *Difference between the Profile Variables and the Level of Knowledge in Traditional Emoticons*

Emoticon	Profile Variables	Mean	Sig.	Interpretation
Traditional Emoticon	**a. Age**			
	18-20	2.74	.454	Not Significant
	21-23	3.00		
	24-above	2.50		
	b. Sex			
	Male	3.11	**.035**	**Significant**
	Female	2.65		
	c. Internet enabled devices			
	Smartphone	2.76	**.000**	**Significant**
	Laptop	2.92		
	Tablet	3.22		
	IPhones	3.67		
	Desktop	3.20		
	d. Social Networking Sites Access			
	Facebook	**5.00**	.070	Not Significant
	Instagram	2.90		
	Twitter	3.00		
	Messenger	2.76		
	Text Messaging	2.81		
	Yahoo	2.60		
	Google/Gmail	2.88		
	YouTube	2.84		
	f. Reason for using emoticons			
	To make the text easier to understand	2.54	.255	Not Significant
	To express emotions	2.73		
	They are fun	2.56		
	To enhance	2.33		
	Others	3.00		

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The following conclusions are drawn based on the salient and significant findings.

The students vary in their age and sex. The Internet enabled device is Smartphone; Facebook is commonly used and followed by the Messenger. With regards to their familiarity of emoticons, respondents were absolutely familiar to these computer mediated communication apps. With regards to their frequency of use, respondents' response that most of them always use emoticons. And with regards to their reason for using emoticons, 'to express emotion' was their highest or best reason why they use it. The students are fairly knowledgeable in animated emoticons and traditional. There is significant difference between the level of knowledge in emoticons of the respondents and profile variables except for the age, familiarity of emoticons, frequency of use of emoticons and reasons for using emoticons.

Based from the findings and conclusions the researchers strongly suggest the following recommendations: (1) The teachers should step up in using computer mediated communication especially on emoticons ;(2) The respondents need to gain more knowledge in emoticons and be updated in social media enable to avoid conflicts or misunderstandings with other people;**(3)** The respondents should be smart in using emoticons and they are to think first what kind of emoticon they are going to use in communicating to minimize misunderstanding and avoid conflicts; and, (4) Future researchers are encouraged to conduct the same study using bigger number of respondents from different courses in PSU-Lingayen Campus or outside the campus and they must conduct similar study to validate the results of the study.

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