

Justification of Emoticons as Verbal Vs Nonverbal Communication Tool

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Abstract: Emoticon Is An Abbreviated Version Of ‘Emotion Icons’ Referred To Graphical Sign For Example, Sad/Frown Face Is Regularly Used In Electronic Mediated Communication Messaging. They Are Frequently Used To Humanize Conversation And Convey Emotion Via Channels Of Communication That Is Parallel To Semantic One. Emoticons Have Been A Pervasive Communication Tools Used Mostly While Interacting In Social Media. Undoubtedly, That Is Supposed To Be An Informal Tool To Be Used Among Friends And Family Members, A Large Portion Of Formal Official Communication Uses Emoticons In Emails And Other Media. But Whether It Falls In The Category Of Verbal Or Nonverbal Communication Tool Is Not Apparent. This Study Aims At Justifying If Emoticons Belong To Verbal Or Nonverbal Communication Tool. A Qualitative Research Has Been Conducted Based On Secondary Qualitative Data To Explore Different Dimensions Of Emoticons, Properties Of Both Verbal And Nonverbal Communications, And Categorize Emoticon As Either Of Those. Observational Aspect Along With Researcher’s Intuition Has Been Given Priority To Conclude The Justification.

Keywords: Emoticons, Communication, Verbal, Nonverbal, Social Media

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I. INTRODUCTION:

The Rise Of Social And Digital Media Has Created A Gateway For Emoticons. The Widespread Of Emoticons Have Adhered So Strongly With On-Going Traditional Communication Tools That It Will Be Inconceivable For Common Netizens (I.E., Internet Citizens) To Communicate Emotions Properly Devoid Of Emoticons. Everyday 90% Of The Online Population Use Emoticons In Sending Text And Emails (Cell Press, 2017). The Evolution Of Emoticons Has Also Created An Opportunity For Substituting Words In Text Messages, Social Media Apps, And Sometimes Even In Emails. As Emoticons Are One Of The Easiest And Shortest Means Of Communication That Exerts Emotions And Helps The Message Receivers To Comprehend Denoted Messages Easily, Netizens Have Been Accustomed To Use It In Online Communications. The Importance Of Positive Communication Relies On The Proper Comprehension Of Diversified Impacts Of Communication Types. So, The Understanding Of The Communication Type Of Emoticon Can Play A Role To Enhance Proper Communication In Different Situations.

Objectives Of The Study:

The Main Objective Of The Study Is To Identify Whether Emoticons Are Verbal Or Nonverbal Communication. In Addition To That, Some More Specific Objectives Have Been Served As Follows –

- To Identify Different Dimensions Of Emoticons
- To Study Properties Of Verbal And Nonverbal Communications
- To Provide Justification To Categorize Emoticons As Verbal Or Nonverbal

Background Of The Study:

Identifying The Types Of Communication Can Be A Confusing Effort. In Order To Identify The Types Of Communication, It Is Required To Analyze The Verbal And Nonverbal Properties Of A Communication. For Example, Facial Expression, Eye Contact, Posture Or Body Language Are The Hints For Nonverbal Communications. During Interpersonal Communication Body Language And Facial Expression Helps To Articulate Emotions. Cues (E.G. Body Language, Facial Expression, Voice Pitch) Come Into Assistance For Easy And Clear Communication Of Intricate Expression Of Emotion (Park & Fink, 2013). Without The Inklings Of Emotions In Interpersonal Communication, It Is Hardly Possible To Connect With The Receiver Of The Message And Sometimes The Receiver Of The Message Might Feel That Sender And Receiver Are At A Cross

Purpose. At The Inception Of Electronically Communicated Messages, It Was Impractical To Connect Emotionally With Words. To Capacitate This Weakness Of Electronic Messages, Pictorial Messages Have Been Created With Alphanumerics, Punctuation And Other Characters That Are Called Emoticons (Walter & D'addario, 2011). Emoticons Have Allowed Electronic Messages To Emanate Emotions Though In A Written Format But, It Is Still To Be Found Whether Emoticons Are Verbal Or Nonverbal Communications.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Nonverbal Communication Encompasses Body Language Communication That Incorporates Proxemics (Physical Space In Communication), Eye To Eyeconnection, Head Gesturing, Posture, Gesture, Touching In Communication, Paralanguage (Nonverbal Signs Of Voice), Etc. As Well Address, Adornment, Natural Variables Etc. (Hans And Hans, 2015). Substituting Verbal Communication, Complementing Verbal Communication, Modifying Spoken Word, Expressing Emotion Or Interpersonal Attitudes, Contradicting What Is Said, Regulating Conversation By Helping To Mark Speech Turns, Conveying Personal Or Social Identity By Dress Or Adornments, And Contextualizing Interaction By Creating A Social Setting Are The Purposes Of Nonverbal Communications According To Dickson And Hargie (2003). In Short Nonverbal Communication Is Referred To All Nonverbal Stimuli That Has The Capacity To Conveydenotationswhich Can Be Sent With Or Without The Consciousnessof The Message Sender (Nguyen-Phong-Mai, 2015). The Six Noteworthy Functions Of Nonverbal Communication Are To Provide Information, Direct Interaction, Express Feeling, Permit Metacommunication, Control Social Circumstances, Andoversee Impression. According To Leathers (1979), Nonverbal Communication Can Provide Information That Are Hard To Express By Utilizing Words And That Makes It Easier To Communicate Successfully. Control In Interaction Helps A Speaker To Create A Structured Method For Communication (Patterson, 1990). Nonverbal Communication Can Express Consciousness, Affection And Also State Of Mind. Burgoon (1980) Expressed That The Purpose Of The Message Sent By The Sender Becomes Successful If The Sent Message Bears The Precise Meaning To The Receiver Of The Message And Metacommunication Provides Nonverbal Cues To Come In Assistance Of Communicating Effectively. Eddinger And Patterson (1983) Expressed That Social Control In Nonverbal Communication Helps To Exert One's Dominance, Power, And Status.

Verbal Communication Is The Communication Of An Encoded Message With Words To Be Sent From A Speaker To A Listener (Krauss, 2002). Verbal Communication Is Referred To The Exchanging Of The Communication Between Sender And Receiver By The Utilization Of Sound And Words. According To Ross (1989), The Properties Of Verbal Communication Are Intention Of Purpose, Throughput (Continuingthrough Conceptualization, Verbalization, Enunciation, Perception Etc.), Output (Accomplishment Of Expected Objective), Repeating Activities, Adjusting To Negative Input, And Differentiation. The Unique Factors That Set Apart Verbal Communication From Other Communication Types Are Its Function To Transform Data And Its Ability To Change As Per Social Demand. The Four Components Of The Model Of Verbal Communication Are Information, Communication Approach, Communication Network, And Communication Activity (Cf. Sabol And Ondrus 1981, Dolnikandbajzikova 1998, Hoffmannova 1997). Here Information Means Message That Is To Be Encoded By The Sender And Decoded By The Receiver. Communication Means Includes Linguistic And Non-Linguisticsigns. Communication Network Includes Medium (By Which Message Is To Be Conveyed), Channel (The Way To Send Message), Noise, Feedback, And Pragmatic Effect (Desired Effect Of A Sender). Communication Activity Involves Producing Message, Transferring Via Communication Channel And Reception Of The Message.

The Term Emoticons Are Constituted Of Emotion And Icons Which Is Denoted As Graphical Signs (E.G. Smiley, Frowny Face, Etc.). According To Krohn (2004), Emoticons Was Developed As A Mean To Indicate A Joke In A Message Posted To A Communication Science Discussion Forum. Since The Early Age Of The Development Of Emoticons Till Now,Thousands Of Signs Have Been Developed And Many Of Them Have Been Included In The Dictionary (Godin, 1993; Raymond, 1996).According To Kiesler, Siegel & Mcguire (1984), Emoticons Were Developed To Replace Nonlinguistic Information That During Face-To-Face Communications Is Conveyed As Facial Expression Which, Is Symbolized As Nonverbal Communication. So, Emoticons Can Be Referred As Electronic Graphical Image Of Nonverbal Communication As A Substitute For Face-To-Face Nonverbal Communication. Walther &D'Addario (2001) Research Proved That Emoticons Are Nonverbal As They Can Be Used Instead Of Nonverbal Communication While Depicting Emotion At The Same Time. To Prove The Evidence That Emoticons Are Nonverbal, Churches, Nicholls, Thiessen, Kohler And Keage (2014) Specified That Emoticons Is A Source Of Nonverbal Cues Such As Empathy And Relationship Can Be Built On Effective Use Of Emoticons. After Understanding The Meaning Of Emoticons, Human Being Responses Emotionally Toward Emoticons As They Response Toward Facial Expression (Churches Et Al., 2009). Emoticons Becomes Nonverbal Communication After The Message Receivers Understand The Meaning Of A Series Of Text Characters. To Support Emoticons As Nonverbal Communication, Yuasa, Saito &Mukawa (2011) Stated That Brain Identifies Emoticons As Emotional Interaction Like Nonverbal

Communication. Nonverbal Symbols And Characters In Messages Are Considered As A Way Of Communicating Thoughts And Feelings (Rezabek&Cochenour, 1998; Wolf, 2000; Crystal, 2006). Dresner And Herring's (2010) Have Concluded That Emoticons Can Convey Emotional, Non-Emotional, And Deep Intention Factors That Are Correlated With Nonverbal Communication.

The Basic Function Of Emoticons Is Not To Express Emotion But To Convey A Rational Meaning And The Function Is Needed To Be Understood In Linguistic Term Which, Makes Emoticons A Verbal Communication. Provine Et Al. (2007) Stated That Emoticons Hardly Influence The Structure Of A Message. For Example, Smiley Never Interrupts Message Structure Of Any Electronic Message For A Deaf. But, The Major Function Of Nonverbal Messages Is To Express Emotion Where, Emoticons Fail To Exert Any Emotion And Thereby Can Be Recognized As Verbal Communication. According To Walther And D'Addario (2001), Emoticons Involve Higher-Level Process Of Language Production Than Emotion Expression And That Makes More Of A Verbal Communication Than Nonverbal Communication. In The Article 'How Using Emoji Makes Us Less Emotional', Alice Robb Stated That The Overuse Of The Emoji Has Made Human Being Impassive. Same Thing Can Be Related To The Emoticons. The Emoticons Might Have Lost Their Emotional Touch And Emoticons Devoid Of Emotional Touch Is Just Another Verbal Communication Tool. The Key Factors In Verbal Communication Process Are Sending, Encoding, Transmitting Channel, Decoding, Receiving, Feedback, And Noise (Cf. Sabol And Ondrus 1981, Dolnik And Bajzikova 1998, Hoffmannova 1997). Emoticons Can Follow The Basic Communication Process For Verbal Communication. For Example, A Sender Sends Encoded Emoticons Through Digital Platforms And Then Emoticons Are Decoded By The Receiver. The Decoded Message Varies From One Person To Another According To A New Research From University Of Minnesota, Twin Cities. As The Decoded Message Has Diversified Meaning Based On The Perception Of People, Different People Have Different Feedbacks In Presence Of The Noise. Thus, Emoticons Can Be Recognized As Verbal Communication As Their Communication Process Also Replicates The Communication Process For Verbal Communication.

III. METHODOLOGY

The Research Design Is Qualitative In Nature And Has Been Prepared Using Both Primary And Secondary Data. The Primary Data Was Collected From Linguistics Professionals, Emoticon Users, And Emoticon Developers Through In-Depth Interview. Judgmental Sampling Has Been Used To Interview 12 (Twelve) Samples For 15-20 Minutes Each. The Secondary Data Was Collected From Peer Reviewed Journals And Online Lecture Tutorials. The Target Population For The Study Was The People Who Use Emoticons In Social Media As Well As English Linguistics Professionals. The Sampling Frame Was Basically Facebook, Viber, And Whatsapp Users As Well As English Faculty Members And English Linguistics Graduates From University Of Dhaka. A Large Number Of Variables And Parameters Have Been Derived To Justify The Nature Of Emoticons. To Make The Justification Logical, Cartoon Testing And Story Completion Techniques Of Qualitative Research Have Been Implied. The Collected Data Are Coded And Weights Are Put On Variables To Calculated Total Loading. Researchers Intuition Backed By Literature Was The Key To Reach The Conclusion.

IV. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

A Wide Variety Of Factors Such As *Body Language, Eye To Eye Connection, Head Nodding, Gesture* Etc. Encompasses Nonverbal Communication. In Nonverbal Communication, All These Subtle Factors Create A Role In Communicating Messages. As There Are Multitudes Of Suggestive Messages Incorporated In Nonverbal Communication, Sometimes The Meaning Of The Message Can Be Elusive Or Incomprehensive To The Receiver Of The Message. If We Examine The Properties Of Nonverbal Communication Tools, We Can Find That Emoticons Bear The Characteristic Of Nonverbal Communication Tool To An Extent That We Might Conclude That Emoticons And Nonverbal Communication Are Synonymous. Nonverbal Communication Is Comprised Of Innumerable *Indistinct Cues* Such As Head Nodding, Gesture, Posture, Voice Pitch Etc. On The Other Hand, Emoticons Serve The Purpose Of Nonverbal Communication By Representing Specific Cues. For Example, Smile Which Is Nonverbal Communication Can Be Replaced With A Smiley In Emoticons. Or A Laugh In Response To A Joke Which Is Also A Nonverbal Communication Can Be Replaced With A Laughing Emoticon. Emoticons Have The Capacity To Be A Representative Module Of Nonverbal Communication In Digital Messaging Services Where, In Past Nonverbal Communication Cues Could Not Be Used In Digital Messaging Services. But, The Extent Of Emoticons In Digital Messaging Communication Is Bit Constrained As Emoticons Do Not Have The Capacity To Communicate The *Myriad Cues* That Can Only Be Communicated Through Nonverbal Communication. For Example, In A Conversation A Receiver Processes A Wide Variety Of *Body Languages* And *Paralanguage* From A Sender Of Single Message Whereas, Emoticons Send A Single Nonverbal Cue. This Can Be Strength For Using Emoticon In Transferring Nonverbal Cues As In Face To Face Communication A Receiver Gathers A Myriad Of Nonverbal Cues Which Can Have *Dubious Meanings* As Nonverbal Communication Can Be Driven By Unconsciousness As Well. So, *Hoard Of Information* Gathered

By The Receiver Can Be Considered As Noise Also And To Combat This *Weakness* Of Nonverbal Communication, Emoticons Can A Preferred Means Of Communicating Nonverbal Cues As Emoticons Help To Send A Specific Cue To A Receiver To Generate Appropriate Response. And, As The Researchers Have Concluded That Emoticons Can Create The Same Response When Two People Are Conversing In A Face To Face Communication, It Can Be Inferred That Emoticons Are One Of The Best Way Of Communicating Nonverbal Cues. The Sole Purpose Of Nonverbal Communication Is To Come In *Assistance Of Verbal* Means To Communicate Effectively And Emoticons Also Play The Exact Role In Sending Message Effectively To Receiver By Crafting Appropriate Message Which Has The Touch Of Emotion Also. Nonverbal Communication Replaces Verbal Ones And Emoticons Play The Same Role In Digital Message Communication Platforms. For Example, In Response To A Yes/No Question A Respondent Might Use The Smiley/Angry Emoticons To Replace Yes/No.

Verbal Communication Is Entirely Dependent On The *Linguistic Function* Of A Language Whereas, Emotions Have The Ability To Send Nonverbal Cues (E.G. Emotion/Feelings Etc.) And That Refers To The *Incompatibility Of Emotions* To Be Verbal Communication Tool. Linguistic Signs Are Used To Create Emoticons But, As Per The Researchers' Emoticons Can Hardly Emanate Emotion. *Words* And *Sounds* Are The Integral Element Of Verbal Communication Whereas Emoticons Are Not Dependent On Sound Which Excludes Emoticons To Be Verbal Communication. Verbal Communication Is Mainly *Face To Face Communication* Where A Sender Can Transform Information Based On The Circumstances Instantaneously But, Emoticons Are Text Based Communication Where It's Impossible To Transform Information As The Communication Is Dependent On Text. As Emoticons Are Not Compatible With The Core Principle Of Verbal Communication, It Cannot Be Accepted As A Verbal Communication Tool.

Emoticon As The Name Suggests Is A Tool To *Express Emotion* (E.G. Sad/Happy/Perplexed Etc.) Just Like Nonverbal Communication. The Inception Of Emoticons Was Conceptualized To Replace Non-Linguistic Information (E.G. Facial Expression) During One To One Meeting And As Emoticons Serves The Purposes Of Nonverbal Communication, It Can Be Acknowledged As Nonverbal Communication Tool. Also, Emoticons Can Be Used *Substituting* Nonverbal And Spring Emotion At The Same Time Which Bears A Strong Testimony Of Emoticons As Nonverbal Communication Tool. Nonverbal Cues Are Presented Via Emoticons Which Make Emoticons To Be Used As Nonverbal Communication Tool. The Proper Understanding Of Emoticons Creates *Mutual Emotional Interaction* Between Sender And Receiver Of The Message And This Property Of Emoticons Help Us To Identify Emoticon As Nonverbal Tool. Emoticons Have The *Capacity To Convey* Emotional And Non-Emotional And Other Related Factors Like The Nonverbal Which Overlaps The Properties Of Emoticons And Nonverbal Communication And Hereby It Can Be Easily Concluded That Emoticons Are Nonverbal Communication Tools.

V. CONCLUSION

The Prevalence Of Expression Of Emotion Via Punctuation Marks, Numbers And Letter Which, We Call Emoticons In Digital Text Based Communication Justifies Communication At Ease And Emoticons Are One Of The Easiest And Precise Way To Input Feeling In A Cold Linguistic Based Communication. As Per The Idiom- "A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words", Emoticons Endow A Text Based Message With The Emotive Expression To Convey Succinct, Clear Message To Recipient. In This Study, We Have Tried To Examine The Properties Of Emoticons, Verbal Communication And Nonverbal Communication And Finally Reached To Conclusion To Classify Emoticons. Hypothetically Emoticons Can Be Concluded As Either Verbal Or Nonverbal Communication But, Our Empirical Study Has Established That Emoticons Bear The Properties Of Nonverbal Communication And Can Be Concluded As Nonverbal Communication Tool. Emoticons Provide Distinct Emotive Cues And Also Transfer Emotions Which Are Only Present In Nonverbal Communication. And, The Distinction Of Emoticons As Nonverbal Communication Tool Will Help Empower The Sender Of A Message Via Text Based Communication Modules To Communicate With Precision And Add Touch Of Emotion.

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