EMOJI: IS IT THE NEW INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL LANGUAGE?

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Abstract:

The Internet has occupied a large part of our life and has become an essential means of communication, work and study in various ways like websites, smartphones applications and computer programs. And because the Internet is linked to several technological languages, in which emoji is one of the means of communication, therefore, the current research is trying to examine this issue of emoji by raising the following question: Is emoji a communicative language that can be used to translate feelings and convey our messages? In order to do that, this research adopts the descriptive method to answer the above question. The data collection tool is an electronic questionnaire formulated by the researchers, validated by language experts, prepared and distributed using Google forms on students of College of Basic Education- University of Mustansiriyah. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed after collecting 200 random samples according to the frequencies of the answers. The research concluded that emojis are a mature written digital language that plays an important role in daily communication on the Internet.

Emoji means a small digital picture or icon that carries a certain emotional message. According to wikipedia, "emoji is a pictogram, logogram, ideogram or smiley embedded in text and used in electronic messages and web pages" (online:2019). The main purpose of using them is to express emotional and sensational cues which are missing in the typed text or to enrich the meaning of the message (Crystal, 2018:465) It is a simple way of communication in it's digital form because emojis are easy to be understood by almost every single human with a smart device. Instead of saying i'm angry in English, انا غاضب in Arabic or estoy enojado in Spanish it's easier to use this Emoji whatever the language of the person that you are having a written conversation with !.

Keywords: Emoji, International Digital Language.

1.1 Definition of Basic Terms:
1.1.1. Emoji

Emoji means a small digital picture or icon that carries a certain emotional message. According to wikipedia, "emoji is a pictogram, logogram, ideogram or smiley embedded in text and used in electronic messages and web pages'' (online:2019). The main purpose of using them is to express emotional and sensational cues which are missing in the typed text or to enrich the meaning of the message (Crystal, 2018:465) It is a simple way of communication in it's digital form because emojis are easy to be understood by almost every single human with a smart device. Instead of saying i'm angry in English, انا غاضب in Arabic or estoy enojado

in Spanish it's easier to use this emoji whatever the language of the person that you are having a written conversation with !

1.1.2. International

The word international means something that is associated or common around the world's countries. It is something that is familiar and well known for many nations (Oxford dictionary, online:nd).

1.1.3. Digital:

As it is mentioned in Cambridge dictionary (online) digital means "using a system that can be used by a computer and other electronic equipment, in which information is sent and received in electronic form as a series of the numbers 1 and 0". It is anything related to computers, smart devices and the internet that has a numeric language, symbols and codes to form its final form like images, typed text and audio tracks etc....

1.1.4. Language

Language is defined as a means of communication that has two main forms: spoken and written, in addition to many other forms like Bril Language, signs language, symbolic language etc... It is the way by which humans can communicate and exchange information (ibid) .

1.2 Research hypothesis:

People do not use emojis as a communicative language.

1.3. The significance of the study

Language is one of the most important features of human beings. It is a part of their heritage and also the most effective method of transmitting it, it is the tongue that speaks their condition and is an integral part of their being. Every language in the world has different features, such as the number of letters, sounds, grammatical structures, etc., but all languages share the fact of being changing and developing by time (Crystal,2019:42). There are two main factors that contribute to this development in languages. The first one is the socio-cultural factor, where new social or cultural phenomena cast a shadow on the language, vocabulary may be derived from it (Stanla et al, 2018) . As an example of that, let us cite the word "hawasem" in the Iraqi dialect, it appeared at first in a political speech, then it was attached to a war and then to a group of people and now it is attached to illegal house properties!. As for the second factor, it is the growth and development of technological means of communication, the world of the Internet and smart devices, and the limitations imposed on us by software and hardware the rapid spread of this technology has brought rapid linguistic changes affecting the usual way of linguistic communication as a kind of communication modernization. . In the last fifteen years, many technological types of input have appeared and are highly used by smart device owners like doodles, stickers, and emojis simply because they add a sense of entertainment], novelty with time saving elements and

bringing feelings to life through these pictorial types of input. In addition to that, the novel events of Covid-19 pandemic and the shutting down of all the planet has enlarged the role of technology in our everyday life including fields that need high levels of real communication and precise timing like education, meetings and festivals.

After the intrusion of technology into all aspects of our lives, we urgently need to search for the fastest ways to communicate. Here, emojis were the hero of the arena, as they became used even in official fields to shorten time, for example, to take feedback if quick visual statistics, as in electronic lessons. "I smiled if I understood the text" Already, "Raise your hand if you agree with the aforementioned" or "raise your thumb if you agree with this decision" in meetings, and here the emojis moved from a luxury element to a full-fledged language of communication.

1.4 Are Emojis a language?
With reference to the Al-Masry website, languages have the following characteristics:
First: Humanity: it is related to the human race and the beautiful human expression
Second: Systematic: it includes a group of systems that define language, whether written or phonetic
Third: Communicative: it is a language that conveys meaning and achieves communication between people
Fourth: Symbolism: it contains many signs that everyone agrees on its meaning
Fifth: Contextuality: The meaning is determined by the context of the sentence and its connection to the meaning
Sixth: Customary: which people are the components of the language and its connotations
Seventh: Cultural: It is considered one of the languages that defines the culture of its people and is transmitted from one generation to another.
As for Dr. Abu Laban (online), he summarizes the characteristics of language with the following points

Phonemic feature of language:
This characteristic indicates that the phonemic nature of the language is the basis, while the written form of it comes next in terms of existence. The sounds are the material of the human language and there is no significance for these sounds unless they are organized into units or words. It is not possible to identify the significance and comprehend the utterance unless the words are arranged through the articulation apparatus, and are transmitted to the ear of the listener so that they can be analyzed and the intended meaning can be identified.

Language is acquired:
Language is not born with a person, but what is born with him is the willingness to learn it. A child is born without any knowledge of language, but he has the ability or the willingness to acquire it gradually over time. And not at once. Hence comes the role of the social environment in which the child grows, and the role of organized education in the process of acquiring language and entertaining the habits of its use. However, it is noted that language acquisition does not differ in essence from the acquisition of any other skill, and since skills are acquired only through conscious, organized training. The same applies to language, as it is necessary to master its four skills: - listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Language is customary:
The relationship between the word and what it refers to is a customary, not natural relationship. At one time, a certain term was chosen in a particular group to refer to a thing or idea, and it was possible for the group to choose another word for the same thing or idea.

Language is changeable:

It is a social phenomenon, and social phenomena are not fixed, but are subject to change constantly, and change is mostly governed by laws that are almost fixed.

language coding and decoding :

Language symbols mean the expression of something that has a specific meaning, people agree on its significance in different languages, and over the ages, and a word is a symbol that denotes a specific thing, it may indicate something tangible or something abstract, and there is no doubt that teaching Arabic For the beginning children, we should start with the tangible that can be perceived, graduating to the abstract, which takes the human mind and time to perceive.

Language has a communicative aspect :

The importance of the relationship between the content and the means of communication has reached the degree that prompted some thinkers to say that "the medium is the message" to denote the importance of the medium (language) in conveying the content (the message). And to confirm a certain concept that the way the message is delivered is no less dangerous than the message itself. Looking at the language in which the message is conveyed is no less dangerous than the message itself. Looking at the language in which the message is conveyed as one of the main factors in communicating this message, we investigate the accuracy in choosing its words to build our sentences. This also means that learning the Arabic language is not an activity in itself, and when the individual masters the methods of expression, it is not limited to just listening to the language. Rather, the basic components of the success of the Arabic language curriculum are its ability to accurately determine the functions in which the child uses the language.

A language has a system of symbols used by certain peoples in a particular culture:

These symbols acquire their connotations in the light of the circumstances in which they were used, such as time, place, and destination, and other factors that make the time in which the symbols were used have a direct impact on the significance that is given to them. its connotations. And to realize also the difference between the lexical meaning of the language, which is what we find in the dictionary. And the implicit meaning of language, which is what we mean by actual use in certain situations. We should not treat language as separate phenomena that are independent of one another.

Language has meaning:

Language has meaning. Because it is used as a means of communication in society, that is, it consists of symbols that have meanings, and these symbols are known by the speaker, listener, writer and reader. Without this constant knowledge of the meanings, communication becomes difficult, if not impossible, and it should be clear. The connection between the symbol and the thing it means is a customary one, that is, it is not natural.

After examining these characteristics, we see that all of them apply to emojis because they are communicative, interactive, acquired, with meanings and symbols, and are used among a group of people. Also, they are customary and subject to change.. As for the phonetic property of languages, there is a type of emoji called It has audio bils, and it includes specific sounds to increase sensitivity in the symbols and images used, such as the sound of laughter, crying, rain, thunder, and some audio phrases in different languages such as "Are you serious" or "Let's celebrate". In our opinion, most linguistic features are applicable to emojis. In addition to this there are an infinite number of emojis and it depends on the creativity of the users(Stanlaw,2018) Also, emojis have their own dictionaries both online (sites and applications) and paper based. It is worthy to add that there is a type of survey nowadays which is called " emojis survey" in which the respondents answers are collected through using

emojis instead of words and there are many websites offering this service for money or for free.

1.5. Gray Areas in Emojis communication

Stanlaw(2018) mentions that although emojis are a universal method in expressing all languages, but, they act as punctuations because they are attached to word-based sentences as an ending particle, they can not hold the whole thought and meaning as good as words Milne(2021:117) States that some people consider using emojis is somehow an unprofessional behaviour if they were used in formal conversations like sending an Email to a client . Jackson and Jackson(2018:161) believe that visual languages including emojis have some ambiguous sides and are open to degree of interpretation which may vary depending on demographic and context.

Section Two : Procedures and Result :
2.1. Procedures:

The main purpose of any language is the communicative aspect which includes interacting with other people, sending, receiving and understanding messages, sharing ideas and information. To examine the research hypothesis the researchers formulate a questionnaire of 16 Items and they were validated by exposing them to language experts. After applying the experts' suggestions the items were reduced to 13 items and presented in English and Arabic languages to check the communicative aspect of emojis. The researchers used Google forms to distribute it digitally through a link available to everyone. The questionnaire was randomly filled by 200 students from the College of Basic Education. The data were analyzed digitally through Google according to the answers' frequencies. The items of the questionnaire and its results were as follows:

No	Item	Yes	No
1	I have accounts on social media platforms (like : Facebook, instagram, whatsapp, viber, telegram, zoom, telegram) لدي حسابات على مواقع و تطبيقات التواصل الاجتماعي	93	7
2	I study online using Google meet, zoom, FCC. or any other video calling app ادرس عبر الانترنت باستخدام جوجل ميت زوم فري كونفرنس كول او سواها	96.5	3.5
3	I spend a lot of time on internet in communicating with others اقضي الكثير من الوقت بالتواصل مع الاخرين عبر الانترنت	64.5	35.5
4	Using emoji in conversations leads to misunderstanding استخدام الايموجي في المحادثات يؤدي الى سوء الفهم	39	61
5	I use emoji in informal conversations استخدم الايموجي في المحادثات غير الرسمية	89.5	10.5
6	I use emoji in formal conversations استخدم الايموجي في المحادثات الرسمية	79.5	20.5
7	I use emoji in online lessons (like rise hand or thumb up) استخدم الايموجي في الدروس عبر الانترنت كاستخدام خيار رفع اليد او رفع الابهام اي علامه ok	65.5	34.5
8	Emoji is highly used by people who are under 35 years old تستخدم الايموجي بصورة اكبر بواسطة من اعمارهم دون ال35 عاما	31	69
	I think emoji is a language of the age of internet اعتقد بأن الايموجي هي لغة عصر الانترنت	81.5	18.5

0	I clearly understand the meaning of emoji افهم بوضوح معاني الايموجي	87.5	12.5
1	I prefer using emoji more than words to express feelings افضل استخدام الايموجي اكثر من الكلمات للتعبير عن المشاعر	67	33
2	I use emoji to give and get quick feedback(for example likes and dislikes on facebook posts) استخدم الايموجي لاعطاء و الحصول على تغذية راجعة سريعة مثل استخدام علامة اعجبني او لا يعجبني على الفيس بوك	76.5	23.5
3	I use emoji voting استخدم التصويت عبر الايموجي	53.5	46.5

2.2 Results and Conclusion

      After analyzing the frequencies of the questionnaire's items the researchers find that internet communication and chatting takes a notable part of everyday interaction and emojis are highly used as a communicative language in formal and informal digital ways of communication. Thus the research ends up with rejecting the proposed hypothesis and adapting an alternative one that is : people use emojis as a communicative language.

      It is concluded that emojis have a great effect on communication as a mature language and it is not confined to young users only but, it is used by people in different ages .

2.3 Recommendations:

      The researchers recommend more investigation in digital symbolic languages in more specific conditions and fields like in the following:
1. A semiotic study about digital symbolic languages.
2. The effect of using emojis in educational communication.
3. The effect of using emojis on communication for learners with dysgraphia

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