Measuring Cross-Culture Variance: Examining the use of  😊😊😊 across Chinese and American Student populations.

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Abstract

In 2016 the world wide Internet usage stood at 3,578,416,746 or 46.1% of the global population. Internet usage in China is currently at 22% of global usage or 52.2% of its country population (2016). In contrast, the United States has a higher market penetration (88.5%) howver total users is dwarfed by China. The most popular texting software in China is weChat and it is used by 69% of this Internet population.

This study identifies how and where Chinese and American students use emoticons, kaomojis and emojis to express emotions and cultural artifacts that each population subscribes to them. In turn, we will examine the variance between these artifact sets as they define the popular cultures.

It is our belief that studying this issue on a qualitative basis using investigator led questionnaires will lead to identifying specific cultural differences.

Texting?

Texting is distinct from face-to-face dialogue in that it is emotionally incomplete. Regardless of culture this void has been acknowledged in the introduction and broad adoption of emoticons. In the United States, emoticons are constructed using punctuation marks to create left leaning facial expressions. 😊

In a cultural departure from the West, the Japanese invented a vertical emoticon known as a Kaomoji. 😃

In contrast to emoticons and kaomojis, emojis are pictorial ideograms. Emojis are distinct in being drawn on a 12x12 pixel grid versus punctuation marks.

In western texts the common form has been the emoticon with adoption of emojis following as users became aware of them. Kaomoji appears to be confined to Asian usage and the emoji has followed however at a slower adoption rate.

Methodology

Data will be collected from a random sample of American and Chinese students enrolled at a university located in the Northeast United States.

Investigators will provide respondents with a list of typical emotions such as love, happy, sad, envy etc. Each respondent will select from a uniform list of emojis those which best represent the listed emotions. Respondents will then be asked to select appropriate emoticons for those same list of feelings. To avoid respondent fatigue the word list of emotions will be rotated after each session.

Analysis will involve emoticon and emoji counts by emotion and this information will then be analyzed across the respondent groups using the content tools available through the Atlas.ti qualitative software package.

Perspective

Cultures are described within the words that are used to construct a community’s language. These languages have verbal and non-verbal components. Within the past decade, communities around the globe, led by their youth, have expanded from face-to-face speech and have engaged in the primarily non-verbal medium of texting. 😊

Rates of adoption among the three forms varies by culture and the cultural alignment of each type. For example, in western texts the common form has been the emoticon with adoption of emojis following as users became aware of them. Kaomoji appears to be confined to Asian usage and the emoji has followed however at a slower adoption rate.

Central Question?

Within western learning structures Chinese international students confront an extreme culture gap: collectivism versus individualism.

It is believed that culture sensitive use of emojis can reduce the perceived gap as it relates to these students’ learning outcomes. 😊