

Letter to the Editor: The Role of Emojis in E-Learning

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Dear Editor,

Today, with the advent of computers, smartphones and communication networks, telecommunications have become more widespread than ever, meaning that computer-mediated communication (CMC) has now been formed (1), and it is largely text-based (2). In this type of communication, it is not always possible for people to fully express themselves, or there might be ambiguities in the messages that they receive. In other words, a receiver's interpretation of a text might be semantically different from what the sender intends, and there is no semantic affinity. The most important factor could be the lack of non-verbal cues which can affect the transmission of information (3). Therefore, more time and further messaging are required to communicate the intended meaning (1, 4). Distance education is no exception to this rule and could even be much more challenging than regular distance communication.

To address this challenge of the modern age, some new templates have been introduced which use graphic elements called emojis. The introduction of emojis in 1997 led to dramatic developments and

reduced the language costs. According to Gn (5), it is a shortened language or a visual language with a special framework designed for computer-mediated communication. Li et al. (4) argue that emojis have become a catalyst for expressing emotions and enriching the text, and are used as non-verbal cues. The wider use of emojis was due to their integration into mobile applications. In view of their relevance in different fields and their multiple functions especially in social media, emojis have become a popular research topic studied by many researchers from various disciplines including computer science, communication, psychology and sociology (6). It appears that little research has so far been conducted on the role of emojis in e-learning. The knowledge gap in this area is exposed when one simply conducts a search in databases using the following formula:

Emoji AND (elearning OR e-learning OR electronic learning)

This is in spite of the fact that the role of emojis in technology-based education is one of the potentially important areas of research. Perhaps the most basic issue that can be

addressed by researchers is the extent to which emojis can influence education-based learning and learners' cognitive development. Furthermore, emojis can be appealing to the child learners, especially since they often have difficulty expressing their feelings on various issues. Accordingly, one can learn about emojis' impact on the educational process and carry out relevant studies based on educational methods.

Another important line of research in this area is "Sentiment Analysis" which could involve data mining techniques and using a combination of texts and emojis. In this regard, one can also take note of educational content in social networks or e-learning platforms, which is always accompanied by the exchange of emojis. They provide a basis for analyzing issues such as the way learners or teachers react to a particular subject, or their way of expressing themselves in educational environments. The acquired results will enhance our knowledge of human interactions in these environments, and contribute to academic advancement in various disciplines.

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Conflict of interests

The author declares that they have no conflict of interests.

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