Ilkogretim Online - Elementary Education Online, 2021; 20 (1): pp. 1814-1825
http://ilkogretim-online.org
doi: 10.17051/ilkonline.2021.01.193

The Emoticon and Emoji Usage among Elementary Language Learners: A Case Study

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Abstract. The present study investigated the elementary foreign language learners' usage of emoticons and emojis in their media communication in English. Fifty-two foreign elementary language learners of the Final International University (FIU) were worked with. Data were collected through a questionnaire which was seen as an effective tool (See Appendix -1 and 2). The collected data were analysed through SPSS version 20 and coding was used to calculate the frequencies. The study tried to find answers on whether the elementary language learners differentiate between emojis and emoticons, who uses emojis and emoticons more, in which contexts, how and why they use emojis and emoticons at the School of Foreign Languages at the FIU use in their media communication in English. The researcher considers that the results of this present study will provide insights for both learners and language teachers in the field.

Keywords: Emoticons, Foreign language learners, EFL learners, learner emotions, L2 learning.

Received: 02.11.2020 Accepted: 17.12.2020 Published: 10.01.2021

INTRODUCTION

It has been reviewed by many scholars in the literature that communication is not only a matter of speaking, writing, or interpreting words or phrases. Truly, it can be considered as a complex process that includes some main factors such as language, grammar, content, experience, interlocutors, and nonverbal cues (Rezabek & Cochenour, 1998). Therefore, emoticons and emoji have received great attention to become a research topic to be investigated. Many scholars have drawn attention to the importance of non-verbal communication to understand the meaning and nature of the message that is attempted to be conveyed (Argyle, 1988). People in the history used emoticons in their paintings in the caves, on the walls, rocks, and trees as channels in order to send their messages and emotions to others. However, Danesi's (2016) claim stated that human beings are not able to create a sense of these emoticons since they need to be gone through step by step in order to extract their meanings. As for today's conditions, computers are preferred to be used and the term computer-mediated communication (CMC) lacks contextual information and, therefore, it might not be clear for people to understand the intended message clearly (Sproull & Keisle, 1986; Walther, 1992).

When we go back to early research, we could see it was argued that text-based forms of CMC lack non-verbal cues such as mimics, gestures, facial expressions, or prosodic features (Daft and Lengel, 1984; Kiesler, 1986; Rice and Love, 1987; Culhan and Marcus, 1987). On the other hand, other studies that have been done by Walter and D'Addario (2011), Chad et al. (2012), Haji and Bakir (2019), and Jaeger et al. (2017) argue that communicators can use emoticons or emojis to express non-verbal cues and emotions. They support the idea that emoticons and emojis need to be used in order to convey one's feelings to others as online interactions lack the facial expressions and certain body gestures. For instance, a writer of an emoticon or an emoji wants his/her reader to enact an oration and complete by putting facial expressions. This way of communication makes communicators exchange emotions and also enhance the message content (Thomson and Foulger, 1996; Walther and D'Addario, 2001). Moreover, it helps them to form an impression of their communication way and their interlocutors' disposition or attitudes. In a study done by Constantin et al. (2002), it was revealed that chat room moderators were perceived as more "dynamic, talkative, and valuable" since they used emoticons in their CMC context. In addition to this, using emoticons and emoji makes people develop CMC skills to decode textual cues to form interpersonal impressions and gain more knowledge, and develop relationships through CMC interactions. Further, emoticons and emojis provide communicators with better information and knowledge (Daft and Lengel, 1984). However, people's usage of emojis and emoticons can be influenced due to different types of personality traits. One individual may use different varieties of emojis and emoticons due to his/her personality type. On the other hand, one's emoji and emoticon usage would encourage others' emoticon usage in CMC contexts and some peoples' usage may be a source on discouraging others' attitudes and emoticon usage (Huffaker and Calvert 2005).

Naturally, there are some people who found emojis and emoticons annoying and unnecessary. Different people may give different meanings to emojis and emoticons and their interlocutors might be annoyed by receiving them in their CMC contexts. Therefore, the senders mainly might not be understood clearly and this would be interpreted as annoying and interrupting (Riva, 2002). Besides, the overuse of emojis and emoticons in CMC conversations is another factor that brings negative attitudes towards their usage since it blocks the flow of reading (Harishankar, 2006). In addition to this, it was claimed in the literature that since contextual information is lacked in the CMC context, electronic messages can be perceived as behaving rudely and offensively (Jenson, 2005). Also, as stated by Harishankar (2006), sending and receiving too many emojis and emoticons might cause slowing down a problem for the web systems and even might result in a crash of computers. Therefore, some people only prefer to use the simplest ones in their conversations.

In the past decade, scholars investigated different areas of communication and emotions. In a study done by Walter and D'Addario (2011) investigated the emoticons used by users in CMC contexts. Their emoticon usage was measured especially in their e-mails and instant messages. Besides, they claimed that CMC is sometimes used for social purposes. On the other hand, Chad et al. (2012) investigated emoticons in text messaging and how genders used a variety of different emoticons. Another significant study of Park et.al. (2013) investigated the semantic, cultural, and social aspects of how emoticons were used on Twitter and it revealed that emoticons were not limited to convey any emotion to receivers as jokes or socio-cultural norms depending on the identity of the interlocutor. The attention received in the area of cyberspace has become highly-provoking and it had some certain features. Firstly, it is nearly impossible to recall the messages that people send to each other. In other words, once the messages are sent, then it becomes difficult to get them back. Secondly, non-verbal features such as mimics, gestures, body, posture or facial expressions are not visible in cyberspace. Therefore, people might not be able to get the exact emotion, stress, tone, intonation, rhythm, or intended meaning of a message clearly unless different types of audio-visual modes of communication are used.

This case might mislead interlocutors into having some difficulties and according to Mehrabian (1971), the contribution of linguistic elements to people's face-to-face communication is only 7 %, non-verbal information is 55 %, and prosodic features is 38 %. In order to convey the right emotion for a person to another person in front of him/her, people have started to use different symbols and cues that computer keyboards allow them. These might also be called emoticons since they carry some emotions. On the other hand, there are other pictographs that can carry emotions to be sent to interlocutors in computer-mediated communication (CMC). These are called emojis among communities nowadays. In the CMC context, users prefer to use some symbols and icons in order to express their emotions and support what they write. Based on Jaeger's (2017) definition, emoticons (emotion + Icon) are alphanumerical characters, letters, punctuation marks, and numbers that are made up of a pictorial icon that resembles human faces. Throughout these icons, emotions are sent to receivers to express certain feelings. For instance, *:-)* indicates a smile and sends an emotion to the reader in the CMC context (Schenker, 2016). On the other hand, emojis are first created by Kurita (1999) in Japan and he defines them as *el* than means picture and moji = a character. According to him, emojis are more general than emoticons and they consist of faces, symbols, and pictograms of objects. Another definition was given by Grannan (2018) and he defined emojis as yellow cartoony faces with various expressions, as well as animals, buildings, food objects, mathematical symbols, and morel. The main difference between them is that while an emoticon consists of different faces showing expressions, an emoji might be anything to transport emotions of humans. Another remarking difference between them is that emoticons are created with basic characters of computer keyboards, however, emojis are real symbols and images which are rendered on devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. For example, the variations of yellow faces on smartphones and computers are emojis. However, alphanumerical characters such as *: (* for sad is an emoticon (Jaeger et al., 2017)

Emojis Emoticons

Figure 1. *Emojis and emoticons (taken from the internet)*

Emojis and emoticons are used by people for several reasons such as saving time and space in writings, supporting what has been written in a certain context or content, or showing certain emotions. In addition to this, they are very common among teenagers and are used for fun purposes in their communication. However, the way emojis, emotions, and cues are used can show differences from society to another society since there have some cultural norms, traditions, and different backgrounds. They might have a social communication aspect that is known by the users of the same community, therefore, they tend to transfer information rather than expressing emotions (Derks, 2007). In this case, when people use emoticons, emojis, and cues in their social interactions, they actually move away from being judged unfavourably by those who they interact with (Fischer et al., 2004). They mainly try to support their verbal parts with an emoticon or an emoji or express humour in order to make themselves be understood by other people that they communicate with. Besides, the usage of an emoticon or an emoji can be affected by social factors as well as emotions (Derks et al., 2008). Another reason why people use emoticons and emojis can be considered as adding emotion to their messages that are being transmitted to their interlocutors.

As for the purpose of the study, the researcher firstly tried to investigate and reveal the elementary foreign language learners' usage of emoticons and cues in their media communication in English in their real-life contexts. Secondly, he aimed at revealing whether female or male learners use emoticons and emojis more, and finally in which situations they use emoticons and emojis. FIU language learners were given a questionnaire to be filledlic. It is believed that the findings of the present study will assist lecturers of English and provide insights. On the other hand, as the significance of the whole study, it could be clearly stated that there have been many studies regarding the usage of social media communication in recent literature. However, this study aimed at contributing to the field with its focus on revealing language learners' emoticons and cues usage in CMC in Northern Cyprus context and it is considered to function as a reference for the language learning/teaching field. Moreover, revealing their emoticons and emojis also can be the indicator of the real-life communication of other learners and teachers, therefore, other learners and teachers will have a chance to analyse their own teaching and learning processes. Additionally, this may also help improve other language teachers' and learners' perspective in foreign language teaching/learning. Therefore, three research questions were designed to be addressed as follows:

1- Do elementary foreign language learners differentiate between emoticons and emoji?
2- Who uses emoticons and emoji more? Females or males?
3- In which context, how and why do elementary foreign language learners use emoticons and emojis?

METHOD

In order to gather more quality data from the participants and address the research questions of this current study, quantitative methods have been used. Therefore, in order to gather the quantitative data, the participants were given a questionnaire containing fifteen sentences to be rated as Likert-scale (Strongly Disagree – Disagree – N/A – Agree – Strongly Disagree) that was taken and modified from the recent literature (See Appendix - 2). The researcher regarded the quantitative data as the most appropriate instrument to find out the use of emoticons and emojis of foreign elementary language

learners. They were informed about the ethical procedures and detailed explanations were provided to the participants about the purpose of the study. They voluntarily accepted to participate.

Participants

The present study aimed at investigating fifty-two foreign elementary preparatory school learners at the Final International University (FIU), in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to focus on their use of emotions and emojis in computer-mediated communication (CMC) during 2018 – 2019 academic year. Fifty-two foreign elementary language learners (16 females, 36 males) ages ranged between 16 -19 were investigated. They had different backgrounds and they mainly come from different parts of the world such as Libya, China, Syria, Turkmenistan, Russia, Nigeria, Congo, Ivory Coast, Northern Cyprus and Turkey. They were placed in elementary level and received twenty-five hours of English instructions per week and these are divided into four main areas: 1- main course (15 hours), listening & speaking (4 hours), reading & writing (4 hours), and project & communication (2 hours).

Data Collection Tools and Analysis

The participants were given a questionnaire that consisted of fifteen items. It has been adapted and modified based on the recent literature outcomes. Moreover, it was distributed to respected experts in the field in order to increase the validity. Based on their feedback, items were modified. Then, the participants were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with each item. The researcher then analysed the quantitative data through the SPSS (ver. 20) with analytic transcriptions in order to find answers to the research questions. In order to do this, he provided descriptive statistics including obtained numbers and percentages for each item in the survey lists. Based on the results, he intended to provide more evidence to support statistical data with clear explanations. In case of asking for further tables or statistical results, the researcher is ready to provide the readers with more informative findings.

RESULTS

In this section, Cronbach's alpha scores of fifteen items is presented to see the reliability scores to have significant results. Then, descriptive scores of each item are presented and interpreted.

Table 1. *Reliability statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,781	15

Table 1 shows the reliability scores of the fifteen items that have been used for the study. The obtained score ,781 indicates that the items which were used to investigate the foreign elementary language learners' emoticon and emoji usage seemed to be reliable. The obtained data in Table 2 displays the mean scores and the standard deviation details of each item that has been measured according to gender. The results for both sexes indicated that there was nearly no difference in answering the selected items in terms of using emoticons and emojis in the computer-mediated communication contexts.

Table 2. *Group statistics*

Items from 1 to 15	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1- I can distinguish between emoticons and emoji.	Female	16	3,3750	1,02470	,25617
	Male	36	3,6944	1,06421	,17737
2- A message without an emoticon/emoji seems emotionless.	Female	16	3,3125	1,07819	,26955
	Male	36	3,5278	1,15847	,19308
3- A message without an emoticon/emoji seems dull.	Female	16	3,0000	1,15470	,28868
	Male	36	3,3611	1,09942	,18324
4- Emoticons/emoji usage affect the way people judge your personality.	Female	16	2,8750	1,25831	,31458
	Male	36	3,2778	1,11127	,18521

5- Females use emoticons/emoji more than males.	Female	16	3,4375	1,31498	,32874
	Male	36	3,7222	1,13669	,18945
6- I use emoticons/emoji with the opposite sex.	Female	16	2,8125	1,42449	,35612
	Male	36	3,5000	,94112	,15685
7- Specialty affects emoticon/emoji usage.	Female	16	3,3750	1,14746	,28687
	Male	36	3,3889	1,04957	,17493
8- I use emoticons/emoji with my teachers.	Female	16	3,0000	1,36626	,34157
	Male	36	2,8889	1,11555	,18592
9- I use emoticons/emoji to express my true emotions.	Female	16	3,1250	1,45488	,36372
	Male	36	3,8056	1,21466	,20244
10- I use emoticons/ emoji in academic communication.	Female	16	2,5625	1,20934	,30233
	Male	36	2,8333	1,23056	,20509
11- I use emoticons/emoji in socio-emotional communication.	Female	16	3,6250	,88506	,22127
	Male	36	3,6111	1,04957	,17493
12- Emoticons/emoji help in message comprehension.	Female	16	3,1250	1,08781	,27195
	Male	36	3,9444	,79082	,13180
13- Emoticon/emoji usage adds enjoyment to the conversation.	Female	16	3,3750	1,25831	,31458
	Male	36	4,1389	,76168	,12695
14- Emoticons/emoji are used to make conversations less formal.	Female	16	3,5625	1,20934	,30233
	Male	36	3,4722	1,08196	,18033
15- Emoticons/emoji are used to save more time in communication	Female	16	3,6250	,95743	,23936
	Male	36	4,1944	,98036	,16339

The data for the first item below provide the scores whether the participants could distinguish between an emoji or an emoticon. According to the results, only seven (43 %) of female learners differentiated between an emoji and an emoticon. However, the majority (n=27) of male participants could distinguish between an emoji and an emoticon. The obtained results proved that more than half of the participants at the FIU were aware of the difference between an emoji and an emoticon.

Table 3. *I can distinguish between emoticons and emojis*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
I can distinguish between emoticons and emojis.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	2	3
	DISAGREE	1	4	5
	NEUTRAL	7	3	10
	AGREE	5	21	26
	STRONGLY AGREE	2	6	8
Total		16	36	52

For the second item, only eight (50 %) of the female participants stated that a message seems emotionless without an emoticon or an emoji. Whereas in males' cases, 62 % of them thought that messages should have an emoji or an emoticon in order to carry an emotion. Surprisingly, 50 % of the female participants pointed out that there was no need for an emoticon or an emoji when they communicate in their cyberspace. These data that can be seen in table 4 may be accepted as an answer for one of the research questions.

Table 4. *A message without an emoticon/an emoji seems emotionless*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
A message without an emoticon/emoji seems emotionless.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	2	2
	DISAGREE	5	6	11
	NEUTRAL	3	6	9
	AGREE	6	15	21
	STRONGLY AGREE	2	7	9
Total		16	36	52

For the item 3, the gathered data in table 5 revealed that the majority (75 %) of the female participants disagreed that a message can seem dull without an emoji or an emoticon. As for the male participants, 56 % of them thought that there was no need to add an emoji or an emoticon to their messages in their cyberspace communication since it would not support what they write during their communication. It could be inferred that during their cyberspace contexts, the communicators might not need any emojis or emoticons to be added to their written texts.

Table 5. *A message without an emoticon /an emoji seems dull*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
A message without an emoticon/emoji seems dull.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	4	4
	DISAGREE	7	2	9
	NEUTRAL	5	10	15
	AGREE	1	17	18
	STRONGLY AGREE	3	3	6
Total		16	36	52

The obtained data for item 4 in table 6 showed that the majority 57 % of both sexes disagreed with the idea that an emoji or an emoticon can affect the way people judge their personality. They would not think that other communicators who are active in their cyberspace contexts will judge them due to the type of emoji and emoticon usage.

Table 6. *Emoticon/emoji usage affects the way people judge your personality*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
Emoticon/emoji usage affects the way people judge your personality.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	3	2	5
	DISAGREE	3	7	10
	NEUTRAL	4	11	15
	AGREE	5	11	16
	STRONGLY AGREE	1	5	6
Total		16	36	52

According to the results of the fifth item in table 7, scores indicated that 64 % of the participants agreed that females use more emoticons and emojis compared to males with their messages and only 23 % of them disagreed this thought. This could be seen as there is an agreement on the female usage of

emoticons or emojis more than males in their cyberspace interactions and it could be treated as another significant finding of the current study. However, the number of the female participants (16) could be seen as a limitation compared to male number (32).

Table 7. *Females use emoticons/emojis more than males*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
Females use emoticons/emoji more than males.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	1	2
	DISAGREE	4	6	10
	NEUTRAL	2	5	7
	AGREE	5	14	19
	STRONGLY AGREE	4	10	14
Total		16	36	52

The gathered data of the sixth item in table 8 revealed that 53 % of male participants use emoticons and emoji with females in cyberspace communication. Yet, 50 % of the female participants stated that they do not prefer to use any emoticons or emojis with male communicators. Only 31 % of them pointed out that they use emojis and emoticons with their messages when communicating with males in their cyberspace.

Table 8. *I use emoticons/emojis with the opposite sex.*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
I use emoticons/emojis with the opposite sex.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	3	0	3
	DISAGREE	5	6	11
	NEUTRAL	3	11	14
	AGREE	2	14	16
	STRONGLY AGREE	3	5	8
Total		16	36	52

The obtained data for item 7 in table 9 revealed that half of both sexes thought that speciality affects emoticon and emoji usage in cyberspace. Other half pointed out that speciality does not have any effects on emoticon and emoji usage. It could be accepted that specialty would not be seen as a criterion during CMC interactions to or not to use an emoji or an emotion.

Table 9. *Specialty affects emoticon/emoji usage.*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
Specialty affects emoticon/emoji usage.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	3	4
	DISAGREE	2	2	4
	NEUTRAL	6	13	19
	AGREE	4	14	18
	STRONGLY AGREE	3	4	7
Total		16	36	52

For the next item, 40 % of the participants stated that they would not prefer to use emoticons and emojis with their teachers in their cyberspace communications. Only 35 % of the participants pointed out that they use emojis and emoticons with their teachers. It could be assumed that this may be due to the relationship between the teachers and the students during their education years. The rest (25 %) remained neutral for this item.

Table 10. *I use emoticons/emojis with my teachers*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	male	
I use emoticons/emojis with my teachers.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	4	6
	DISAGREE	5	10	15
	NEUTRAL	3	10	13
	AGREE	3	10	13
	STRONGLY AGREE	3	2	5
Total		16	36	52

The gathered data in table 11 revealed that the majority (64 %) of the participants use emoji and emoticons to express their feelings when they communicate with other people. Only a quarter (21 %) of them stated that it is not necessary to use an emoji or an emoticon with their messages to express their feelings. This may function as a proof to why the participants use emojis and emoticons during their CMC interactions.

Table 11. *I use emoticons/emojis to express my true emotions*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	male	
I use emoticons/emojis to express my true emotions.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	4	6
	DISAGREE	5	0	5
	NEUTRAL	2	6	8
	AGREE	3	15	18
	STRONGLY AGREE	4	11	15
Total		16	36	52

According to the results of the tenth item in table 12, the majority (71 %) of the participants do not prefer to use any emojis or emoticons in their academic lives. Only a small number (27 %) of the participants stated that they use emojis and emoticons in their academic communication. The results can be seen as both sexes use emojis and emoticons mostly in their daily lives. This could be another significant outcome to proof in which contexts they use or do not use emojis and emotions.

Table 12. *I use emoticons/emojis in academic communication*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
I use emoticons/emojis in academic communication.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	4	7	11
	DISAGREE	3	6	9
	NEUTRAL	6	12	18
	AGREE	2	8	10
	STRONGLY AGREE	1	3	4

Total	16	36	52

The obtained data in table 13 showed that the majority (64 %) of the participants use emojis and emoticons in their socio-emotional communication. From this result, the participants can be seen as active communicators with emoticons and emojis when interacting with other people in their cyberspace interactions. On the other hand, only a small number (12 %) of the participants stated that they do not find using emojis and emoticons necessary in their socio-emotional communication.

Table 13. *I use emoticons/emojis in socio-emotional communication*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
I use emoticons/emojis in socio-emotional communication.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	2	3
	DISAGREE	0	3	3
	NEUTRAL	4	8	12
	AGREE	10	17	27
	STRONGLY AGREE	1	6	7
Total		16	36	52

According to the results of item twelve, the majority (64 %) of the participants thought that emojis and emoticons help their messages to be more comprehensible in computer-mediated communication. The rest stated that they would not need to complete their messages with emojis or emoticons. This finding might function as a reason why the research participants would prefer to use emojis or emoticons in CMC contexts.

Table 14. *Emoticons/emojis help in message comprehension*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	male	
Emoticons/emojis help in message comprehension.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	0	1
	DISAGREE	4	1	5
	NEUTRAL	4	9	13
	AGREE	6	17	23
	STRONGLY AGREE	1	9	10
Total		16	36	52

In item thirteen, the participants were asked to rate whether emoji/emoticon usage adds enjoyment to their conversations. As can be seen in table 15, the findings indicated that the majority (73 %) of them came up with the thought that it makes their messages more enjoyable when they use emojis and emoticons. Only four of the participants disagreed with emoji and emoticon usage when they communicate in cyberspace.

Table 15. *Emoticon/emoji usage adds enjoyment to the conversation*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	male	
Emoticon/emoji usage adds enjoyment to the conversation.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	0	2
	DISAGREE	1	1	2
	NEUTRAL	5	5	10

	AGREE	5	18	23
	STRONGLY AGREE	3	12	15
Total		16	36	52

The obtained data in table 16 revealed that 58 % of the participants thought that emojis and emoticons would be used to make cyberspace conversations less formal. On the other hand, 25 % of the participants pointed out that emojis and emoticons would not make their conversations less formal.

Table 16. *Emoticons/emojis are used to make conversations less formal*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
Emoticons/emojis are used to make conversations less formal.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	1	1
	DISAGREE	5	7	12
	NEUTRAL	1	8	9
	AGREE	6	14	20
	STRONGLY AGREE	4	6	10
Total		16	36	52

For the last item, the participants were asked to rate whether emojis and emoticons were used to save time in their computer-mediated communication. The obtained data revealed that 77 % of them pointed out that emojis and emoticons would save their time when they communicate with other people. Only 10 % of the participants stated that emojis and emoticon usage does not make them save their time during their conversations.

Table 17. *Emoticons/emojis are used to save more time in communication*

Crosstab				
Count				
		GENDER		Total
		Female	Male	
Emoticons/emojis are used to save more time in communication	STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	1	1
	DISAGREE	2	2	4
	NEUTRAL	5	2	7
	AGREE	6	15	21
	STRONGLY AGREE	3	16	19
Total		16	36	52

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study tried to find answers whether the language learners differentiate between emoji and emoticons, who uses emoji and emoticons more, and in which contexts, how and why they use emojis and emoticons. The results are line with Haji, H., and Bakir, N. (2019) that they found female learners with more emoji and emoticon usage than males, both male and female learners use emojis and emoticons to express their feelings, they could differentiate between emojis and emoticons, and they do not use emoticons and emojis with their teachers. on the other hand, some scholars investigated learners from different cultures (Park, Barash, Fink, & Cha, 2013). In their studies, they tried to find answers to what types of emoticons the participants used. In another study done by Danesi (2016) and Andersen (2018), it was found that the Chinese communicators used emojis and emoticons to express their personality clearly, to invoke solidarity, to create shared meanings, and to poke fun among themselves. As Herring (2018) reported, the literature still needs a plenty of different studies on different graphicons in order to

provide scholars and researchers with more signifcant findings. To do this, those who are interested in cyberspace communation need to be supervised well in the field to reveal some significant outcomes for all the researchers and experts in the world. Throughout reviewing the recent literature and the results of the present study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The elementary language learners at the Final University are able to differentiate between emoticons and emojis. In addition to this, they prefer to use emoticons in socioemotional situations while communicating in internet-mediated communication.
2. Almost three-quarters of the participants think that a message seems emotionless without an emoji or an emoticon.
3. Females use more emojis and emoticons in their computer-mediated communication that males do.
4. Results also prove that the participants think that emojis and emoticons help them to express their feelings clearly, increase their message comprehensibility, and make them save more time during their conversations.
5. The participants mainly use emoticons to express their emotions.
6. The participants do not use emoticons with their teachers and this is due to the relationship bond that exist between them - if emoticons are used between them, and this will carry other interpretations.
7. The participants use emojis and emoticons to make their conversation contents more fun.
8. Emoticons help in message interpretation, message comprehension and reducing ambiguity, and at the same time save time and space in internet-mediated communication.
9. The findings also prove that males use more emojis and emoticons with the opposite sex. However, females do not prefer to use emojis and emoticons with males.

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